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**A HISTORY**  
*of the*  
**U.S.S.R.**



# A HISTORY OF THE U. S. S. R.

PART TWO

COMPILED

*by*

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# THE EMPIRE OF THE RUSSIAN NOBILITY IN THE 18TH CENTURY

## *Chapter I*

### FOUNDING OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE

#### 1. THE RUSSIAN STATE AT THE END OF THE 17TH CENTURY

**The Backwardness of the Russian State.** The backwardness of tsarist Russia became particularly noticeable at the beginning of the 17th century, and was chiefly the result of the unfavourable external political conditions under which the country developed. Russia was frequently attacked by foreign enemies who plundered and devastated the country and sometimes ruled it for long periods. Thus, the Tatar-Mongolian yoke lasted over 240 years (1237-1480); Turkey dominated the Black Sea and Azov coast for almost 340 years (1476-1812), barring Russia's access to the southern seas; Russia was blockaded and cut off from the Baltic Sea for over 140 years (1561-1703). Intervention by Poland, Sweden and Rome (1604-1618) also retarded the country's development.

The wars with Poland and Sweden in the 17th century clearly demonstrated the economic, military and cultural backwardness of the Russian state as compared with the countries of Western Europe. Russia had no large industries and was obliged to import extensively from Holland and England, a circumstance which was extremely embarrassing in times of war. The Thirty Years' War in Germany and the wars of Louis XIV had greatly stimulated the development of European military technique, artillery and military engineering, as well as army organization, training and combat methods. The Russian troops, which still consisted largely of levies drawn from the nobility, were poorly armed, employed outworn tactics, and were deficient in manoeuvring on the field. The Streltsi and even the regi-

ments modelled on foreign lines were inefficient. Therefore, in spite of the inherent bravery of the Russian fighting man, military victories were achieved at the price of heavy losses.

Though certain modifications had been introduced the state system remained essentially what it had been since the 16th century. The *prikazi* (government offices) system of administration headed by the boyar дума was a slow-working machine; the waywodes in the towns ruined the population by their extortions; chaos reigned in the fisc; taxation arrears piled up year by year; there were no schools, and few literate people in the country.

The low state of industrial development, state administration, army organization and the level of culture represented a serious menace to the country's security. This state of affairs served as a bait to European neighbours seeking aggrandizement at the expense of Russian lands.

Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich had endeavoured to strengthen Russia's western borders and overcome the Baltic blockade, but he died before he was able to bring his plans to fruition. Nor were the administrative reforms inaugurated by him fully implemented.

After his death the feuds and quarrels among the factious boyars and nobles over possession of the power, land and peasants, broke out with even greater force. The throne was especially furiously contested by the boyar families of Miloslavski and Naryshkin.

**Tsar Fyodor Alexeyevich.** Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich had married twice. By his first wife, a Miloslavski, he had several daughters, the eldest of whom was Sophia, and two sons, named Fyodor and Ivan. Shortly before his death Tsar Alexei married Natalia Kirillovna, daughter of the nobleman Naryshkin. She had been brought up in the family of the boyar Artamon Matveyev, a favourite of the tsar and an advocate of closer ties with western culture. Matveyev had furnished his home in the European style, and he even maintained a troupe of foreign actors. In 1672 Tsaritsa Natalia gave birth to a son, Peter. After the death of Alexei Mikhailovich, his eldest son, Fyodor (1676-1682), a sickly, weak-willed boy of fourteen, ascended the throne. The Naryshkins, who had become influential during Alexei Mikhailovich's last years thanks to their kinship with the tsaritsa, were dismissed after Fyodor's accession, and replaced by the Miloslavskis, relatives of Tsar Fyodor. The tsar was surrounded by an intimate circle of boyars and noblemen who realized the need for changes in the organization of the state.

A commission of elected nobles was set up in Moscow to improve the organization of the army on the basis of military experience. The commission proposed the abolition of the ancient system of precedence, which, owing to the advancement of a large number of people of inferior lineage to posts of importance, had practically lost its erst-

while significance. In 1682 this system was formally abolished at a grand convocation of the Ecumenical Council consisting of the church prelates and the boyars. The records of disputes over precedence were burned outside the palace. The Commission on Military Service remodelled the army of the nobility along lines more closely resembling the organization of regular regiments.

A new cultural influence made itself felt at the court of Fyodor chiefly through the Ukrainians and Greeks. Some of the boyars adopted Polish costume, and introduced foreign books and paintings into their homes. In 1687 the first permanent educational institution, the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy, was opened in Moscow. These were the first signs of reformation aimed at overcoming the backwardness of the Russian state.

## 2. THE REGENCY OF SOPHIA

**The Uprising in Moscow in 1682.** Tsar Fyodor Alexeyevich died in the spring of 1682 without male issue, and the crown was to pass to one of his brothers: either to Ivan, who though the older was feeble-minded, or to Peter. Tsar Fyodor's ruling boyars disliked the overweening and grasping Miloslavskis, and even during the tsar's lifetime had established friendly relations with the Naryshkins. As soon as Tsar Fyodor died, the patriarch and the boyars proclaimed Peter tsar. The crowd that gathered around the palace greeted the decision with cries of approval.

The numerous Miloslavski family refused to accept the transference of power to the Naryshkins, and took advantage of the unrest among the Streltsi as a means of combating their rivals. The condition of the rank-and-file Streltsi, artisans and petty tradesmen at the time grew visibly worse on account of heavy taxation and the general impoverishment of the petty townsfolk. The Streltsi had not received their pay for a long time. The nobles in command of the Streltsi oppressed their men whom they compelled to work on their estates as serfs. Those who complained of their treatment were cruelly punished. Partisans of the Miloslavskis encouraged the Streltsi to regard the Naryshkins as the cause of their troubles. On May 15, 1682, the Streltsi seized several guns, and with banners unfurled and beating drums broke into the Kremlin. Cries were raised in the crowd accusing the Naryshkins of having strangled Ivan, whereupon Peter's mother, Tsaritsa Natalia, led both brothers—Ivan and Peter—out onto the porch. But the infuriated Streltsi, provoked by oppression and their hatred of the Naryshkins, rushed into the palace. One of the first to fall at the hands of the mutinous soldiery was their chief, Prince Dolgoruki. The massacre of the boyars continued until late in the evening. The men dragged the corpses to *Lobnoye Mesto* with mocking cries such as "Here is Boyar

Romodanovsky. Make way for the Member of the Duma!" Among the slain were Boyar Artamon Matveyev and two of the tsaritsa's elder brothers.

The Streltsi mutiny was followed by a wider popular outbreak. The city poor raided the *kholopi prikaz* where serf records were kept, and destroyed almost all the bondage documents.

The Streltsi routed the government of the Naryshkins. The government offices became deserted. The boyars and the clerks fled. Sophia took advantage of the tumult and adroitly made use of the Streltsi as an instrument of achieving her own ends. She conciliated the Streltsi by meeting all their demands and paid them arrears of pay for the past 35 years. On the insistence of the Streltsi both brothers—Ivan and Peter—were jointly proclaimed tsars, the feeble-minded Ivan being considered as the "first" tsar. Sophia was proclaimed regent during the minority of her brothers.

**Princess Sophia.** The Moscow princesses led a secluded life in the privacy of their palace chambers. They were poorly educated and never appeared in public. Sophia was a striking contrast to the other princesses. She studied Polish and read Polish books under the tuition of Simon Polotski, and began to make her appearance in public, even in the presence of foreigners.

Sophia's closest friend and "first minister" was Prince Vasili Vasilyevich Golitsyn, one of the best-educated boyars of the late 17th century. Prince Golitsyn was keenly alive to the necessity of radical reforms which he frequently discussed in his conversations with foreigners. But not a single of the reforms he cherished was destined to see the light of day. Throughout her regency Sophia was absorbed by her struggle for personal sway and feared that reforms would arouse the discontent of the influential but conservative boyars. Golitsyn, who had many enemies among the boyars, also had his misgivings on this score.

For a long time the Polish gentry could not reconcile itself to the loss of Ukrainian territory east of the Dnieper, and particularly to the loss of Kiev. After the Truce of Andrusovo in 1667, the envoys of Muscovy and Poland met several times to conclude a final treaty of peace, but the disputed question of Kiev invariably resulted in the break-off of negotiations. The Turkish issue, however, eventually induced Poland to compromise and come to an agreement with Russia. Austria had formed an alliance with Poland and Venice against Turkey with whom she was then at war. Commerce in the Mediterranean was seriously affected by a hostile Turkish fleet. The allies defeated the Turkish troops at Vienna and compelled the sultan to raise his siege of the Austrian capital. Unable to inflict a decisive defeat upon the Turks, however, the allies solicited Russia's help. In 1686 the Polish king sent a "grand embassy" to Moscow, which, after protracted ne-

gotiations, concluded a treaty of "eternal" peace. Poland agreed to the cession of Kiev and a small adjacent territory to Russia, while Russia undertook to begin war immediately against the Crimean khan, a vassal of the Turkish sultan. Turkey blockaded Russia on the Black Sea. The Crimean Tatars continued to make inroads on southern Russian lands.

The first Crimean campaign by a Russian army in 1687 under Prince V. V. Golitsyn ended in complete failure. The army could not cross the southern steppe, which the Tatars had set on fire, and was forced to turn back. In the early spring of 1689 Prince Golitsyn returned with a stronger army, which this time overcame the difficulties of the march across the steppes and reached the Tatar fortress of Perekop, erected at the narrowest point of the isthmus. Golitsyn, however, hesitated to take this fortress by storm and after a brief siege he ordered a retreat. The Tatars harassed the retiring Russian troops.

The failure of the Crimean campaigns greatly weakened the position of Sophia's government. The nobles openly murmured against the difficulties caused by the war and the senseless losses. Meanwhile Peter's adherents were growing in number.

**Peter's Youth.** During Sophia's regency Peter lived with his mother and their retinue in the suburban palaces, for the most part in the village of Preobrazhenskoye. Although Peter still retained his title of tsar, he had no power whatever. In the shady groves surrounding the village of Preobrazhenskoye, Peter spent the days playing soldiers with his playmates. They built small earthen fortifications and practised taking them by assault. Several years later Peter formed his companions into two "sham" regiments, which came to be called the Preobrazhensky and Semyonovsky regiments, after the names of the two villages.

Once Peter found a foreign sailboat among some of his grandfather's old possessions in the village of Izmailovo. A resident of the foreign settlement in Moscow named Brant, who had once served in the navy, taught Peter to sail this boat, first on the narrow Yauza River (near Moscow) and then on the Izmailovo pond. The pond not providing sufficient cruising room Peter obtained his mother's consent to sail his boat on the big lake at Pereyasavl.

At first Sophia was delighted that Peter occupied himself with military games, for they kept his attention from palace affairs. But the years passed; Peter and his "sham" soldiers were growing up; Peter had already reached the age of seventeen. The two regiments of his childish games trained along European lines became the best in Moscow. Sophia realized the danger that was brewing and prepared for a palace coup. She officially called herself "absolute ruler" and secretly received and feasted the Streltsi in her palace with the object of winning their support. Relations between



Sophia and Peter grew inimical to a point when rupture became unavoidable.

One night in August 1689 Peter received word that Sophia had assembled the Streltsi and was preparing to attack. Peter galloped to the well-fortified Troitsk-Sergiyev Monastery, where he was shortly joined by his "sham" regiments and a regiment of the Streltsi, in addition to some nobles and a few of the boyars. Sophia's attempt to incite the Streltsi ended in failure. Meanwhile the number of Peter's supporters grew from day to day. A month later Peter took over power. Sophia, deserted by everyone, was interned in a convent, and her closest aide, Prince V. V. Golitsyn, was banished to the north.

### 3. THE AZOV EXPEDITIONS AND PETER'S FOREIGN TRAVELS

**The Azov Expeditions.** In the early years following the fall of Sophia's government, Peter did not meddle in his mother's administration of affairs. He continued to indulge in his military games, which, however, grew more and more earnest as time went on. With a small group of assistants he built and launched a man-of-war on Lake Pereyaslavl. Shortly after, he set off for Archangel, where he had his first sight of big ships sailing the open sea. In Moscow Peter frequently visited the foreign settlement, where he made useful acquaintances with foreigners. Patrick Gordon, an old Scottish general, entertained him with descriptions of the battles he had taken part in. François Lefort, a jovial Swiss, arranged for him various amusements. Peter however did not neglect his education. The Dutchman, Timmerman, gave him lessons in arithmetic, geometry and gunnery. Peter made such rapid progress that he soon began to correct the mistakes of his teacher, who was not too well versed in the sciences himself.

Peter's military exercises and manoeuvres were preliminaries for a new expedition against the Crimea. After Golitsyn's unsuccessful campaigns, the Moscow government had confined itself to fortifying the southern borders against Tatar raids. The war against Turkey which Austria and Poland had begun and to which Russia had become a party was being waged half-heartedly. Austria and Poland, disregarding Russia's interests, began negotiations with Turkey for concluding a separate peace, whereupon the Moscow government opened negotiations with the Crimean khan. The latter, however, categorically refused to cede to Russia the fortress of Azov, which was held by a Turkish garrison.

The ancient Russian territory in the region of the Sea of Azov was essential to Russia, as a gateway to the sea via the Don. With Azov in her possession Russia would constitute a threat to the Crimean khan in the event of the Tatars attacking the southern borderlands.



Peter the Great. *An engraving of the 18th century*

Peter decided to capture Azov. In the spring of 1695 a Russian army of 30,000 sailed down the Oka to the Volga on river boats and then crossed over to the Don. Peter wrote back to Moscow: "We amused ourselves at Kozhukhov (Moscow suburb where the manoeuvres were held), and now we are off to Azov to play." Having no fleet Peter could not blockade the fortress from the sea, whence the Turks were steadily receiving reinforcements, arms and provisions.

However, lack of coordination and mutual support among the different regiments of the Russian army permitted the Turks to concentrate their forces at the most vulnerable points. The onset of autumn compelled the Russians to lift their siege of Azov.

The unsuccessful Azov campaign demonstrated to Peter how badly Russia needed a navy. Resolved upon renewing the campaign the following summer, Peter ordered the construction in a single winter of a flotilla of galleys and other light craft. Shipyards were set up on

the bank of the Voronezh River not far from its confluence with the Don, in the vicinity of a forest which provided excellent oak, linden and pine timber for shipbuilding. Peter himself took part in the work, sometimes as an engineer, sometimes as an ordinary carpenter.

In the spring of 1696, to the amazement of the Turks, a Russian fleet of 30 galleys and numerous small craft and rowboats appeared off Azov. The Turkish fleet withdrew without giving battle. Peter laid siege to Azov from the sea and from land. Despairing of assistance from Constantinople, the Turks surrendered at the close of the summer.

**Peter's Trip Abroad.** The taking of Azov did not end the war. The Turks had a strong navy and still dominated the Black Sea. Hence Peter decided to send out a "grand embassy" to establish closer contact with the countries of Western Europe. He commissioned the embassy not only to strengthen and broaden the alliance of European states against Turkey but also to hire a requisite number of foreign specialists, engineers and artillerymen for the Russian army.

The embassy left Moscow in 1697. Peter attached himself to the embassy, travelling incognito in the capacity of a sailorman under the name of Peter Mikhailov. Peter wished to make a close study of the life, culture and technical achievements of Europe. His letters to Moscow bore a seal with the following Slavonic inscription: "I am a student seeking teachers."

Arriving ahead of the "grand embassy," Peter studied the rules of gunnery in the town of Koenigsberg. From here he hastened to the town of Saardam in Holland, noted for its excellent shipyard, where he rented lodgings in the humble home of a blacksmith and started to work at the shipyard as an ordinary carpenter. He was soon recognized, however, for many Dutch merchants had been to Russia and identified this stalwart six-and-a-half-foot workman of powerful physique as the tsar of Russia. To escape the curious crowds Peter moved to Amsterdam, where he became an apprentice at one of the largest shipyards. He worked here for over four months, until a big ship he had started to build was launched. In his free time he visited the manufactories, workshops and museums, and talked with scientists, artists, etc.

From Holland Peter went to England. In London he studied the country's system of government and attended a session of parliament. At Deptford on the Thames he devoted more than two months to the study of shipbuilding.

Peter left England for Vienna to negotiate an alliance against Turkey with the Austrian emperor. But during the "grand embassy's" sojourn abroad it had become clear that the plan for a big alliance of European states against Turkey could not be realized. Most of the European powers were occupied with the fate of the Spanish domin-

ions, since the king of Spain, a descendant of the Hapsburg dynasty of Austria, had died leaving no issue.

The War of the Spanish Succession broke out soon after and lasted for almost 13 years (1701-1714). Austria not only had no desire to help Peter in the war against Turkey but hastened instead to conclude peace with her. Poland also suspended hostilities with Turkey.

During his foreign travels Peter became better acquainted with the political situation in the Baltic countries. Sweden, who had greatly enhanced her power in the 17th century, had seized the Baltic sea-coast and threatened Denmark, Poland and Russia. Sweden deprived Russia of an outlet to the sea, which was essential for the country's economic and cultural development. Already at the beginning of the 17th century she had seized ancient Russian lands along the coast of the Gulf of Finland. Sweden's opponents considered the time ripe for recovering the Baltic seaboard. Peter, who fully realized the importance of the Baltic Sea for Russia, decided to end the war with Turkey and the Crimean khanate and to join the alliance against Sweden.

**The Streltsi Mutiny.** Peter's return to Russia was hastened by news of a mutiny among the Streltsi. The Streltsi had been accustomed to performing light guard duties in Moscow and to engaging in petty trade or in the handicrafts the rest of the time. Peter demanded of them full-time military service. After the capture of Azov he had left some of the Streltsi regiments in the south and transferred others closer to the western border. This aroused keen resentment among the Streltsi who had their families and trades in Moscow. Sophia and her followers, who cherished dreams of a revival of ancient Moscow customs, tried to turn the discontent among the Streltsi to their own ends. Sophia began secret negotiations with the Streltsi, who decided to seize the capital and proclaim her tsaritsa. The Streltsi movement was thus of a reactionary nature. In the summer of 1698 four regiments of the Streltsi stationed in the town of Toropets staged a mutiny and set out for Moscow. General Gordon easily crushed the rebels in an engagement fought near the capital.

News of the mutiny reaching Peter in Vienna, he set out post haste for Moscow. On the way he met King Augustus II of Poland and came to an understanding with him regarding a joint war against Sweden.

Desiring to avoid an elaborate reception, Peter returned to the capital when nobody expected him. Instead of proceeding to the palace he put up in his modest home in the village of Preobrazhenskoye. News of the tsar's return from his foreign tour quickly spread throughout the city. The next morning the boyars, nobles, and merchants and other townspeople came to Preobrazhenskoye to greet him. Peter met them all cordially but would not permit the old ceremony of

kneeling before him. During the reception Peter with his own hand clipped off the long beards of the boyars. Later he issued an ukase prohibiting the wearing of the long, inconvenient, ancient Russian costume.

Peter was dissatisfied with the results of the investigations into the Streltsi mutiny. He reopened the enquiry, establishing the fact of Sophia's participation in the conspiracy. Peter dealt with the Streltsi who had taken part in the revolt with exemplary severity; gallows were set up in many parts of the city, and on the appointed day 195 Streltsi were hanged before Sophia's windows in the Novodevichy Nunnery. In all, 1,200 Streltsi were executed. Peter disbanded the Moscow Streltsi regiments. Princess Sophia, convicted of participating in the conspiracy, was compelled to take the veil.

#### 4. THE BEGINNING OF THE WAR WITH SWEDEN

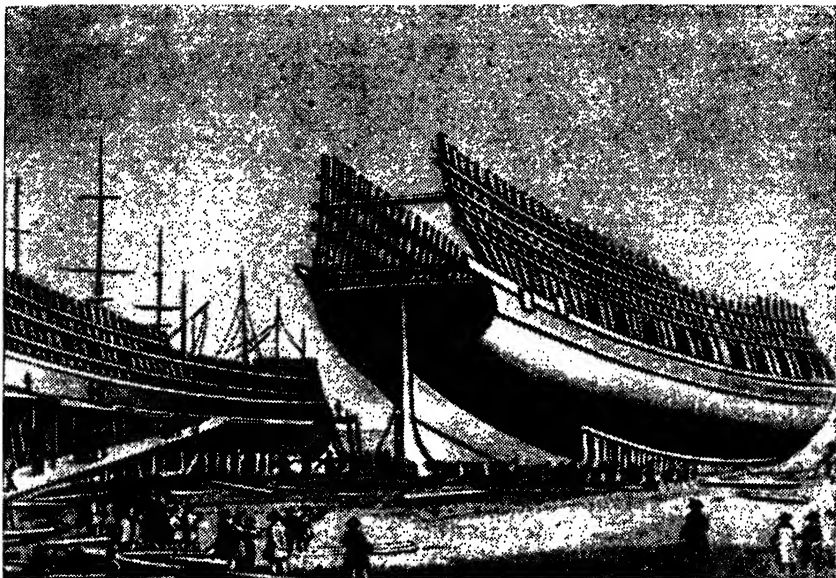
**The Defeat at Narva.** Peter entered into an alliance with Denmark and Poland against Sweden. In preparation for the war for the Baltic he formed new army units by recruiting peasant and household serfs, and freemen. The new soldiers, dressed in dark green uniform and cocked hats after the fashion of the infantry of Western Europe, were drilled from morning to late at night in the suburbs of Moscow. In three months a contingent of 32,000 was trained. Meanwhile Peter had sent an embassy to Constantinople to negotiate with Turkey, with whom peace was concluded in August 1700. Under the peace terms Russia retained Azov.

King Charles XII of Sweden quickly mustered a small but efficient army. The Swedish troops had acquired a good training in the wars of the 17th century and were considered the best in Europe. Charles unexpectedly invaded Denmark and compelled the Danish king to conclude peace. His next plan was to attack his second opponent, King Augustus II of Poland. Sweden did not yet know of Russia's war preparations.

After the conclusion of peace with Turkey, Peter immediately ordered the army to attack the Swedish fortress of Narva, which guarded the approaches to the Baltic Sea.

The siege of Narva at once exposed the shortcomings in the organization and supply system of the Russian troops. In the difficult march over muddy roads the baggage train fell behind the army. There were not enough shells for the artillery, and the gunpowder was of inferior quality. Gun carriages broke down after the first few shots. The soldiers suffered from hunger, cold and exposure in the trenches. Disease broke out.

When Charles learned that Narva was besieged by Russian troops he hastened to the rescue. The Swedish forces appeared before the



A shipbuilding wharf in Petersburg during the reign of Peter I.  
*An engraving of the 18th century*

Russian camp the day after Peter departed to prepare the Russian borders for defence. Under cover of a blizzard blowing against the Russians, the Swedes attacked and broke through the first line of the Russian defences. The mounted nobles' levy fled. The foreign officers in command of Russian units turned traitor and went over to the Swedes. The Russian soldiers, left leaderless, broke up into small groups and continued to beat off the Swedes in hand-to-hand encounters. The Preobrazhensky and Semyonovsky regiments staunchly warded off all attacks and withdrew in full order. Nonetheless the Swedes scored a complete victory. They took many prisoners and captured all the artillery. After defeating the Russian army at Narva, Charles directed his arms against Augustus II. But he erred in thinking that the Russian army would not be able to continue the war.

**The Reorganization of the Army.** Peter set about restoring and reorganizing his army with feverish haste and tremendous energy.

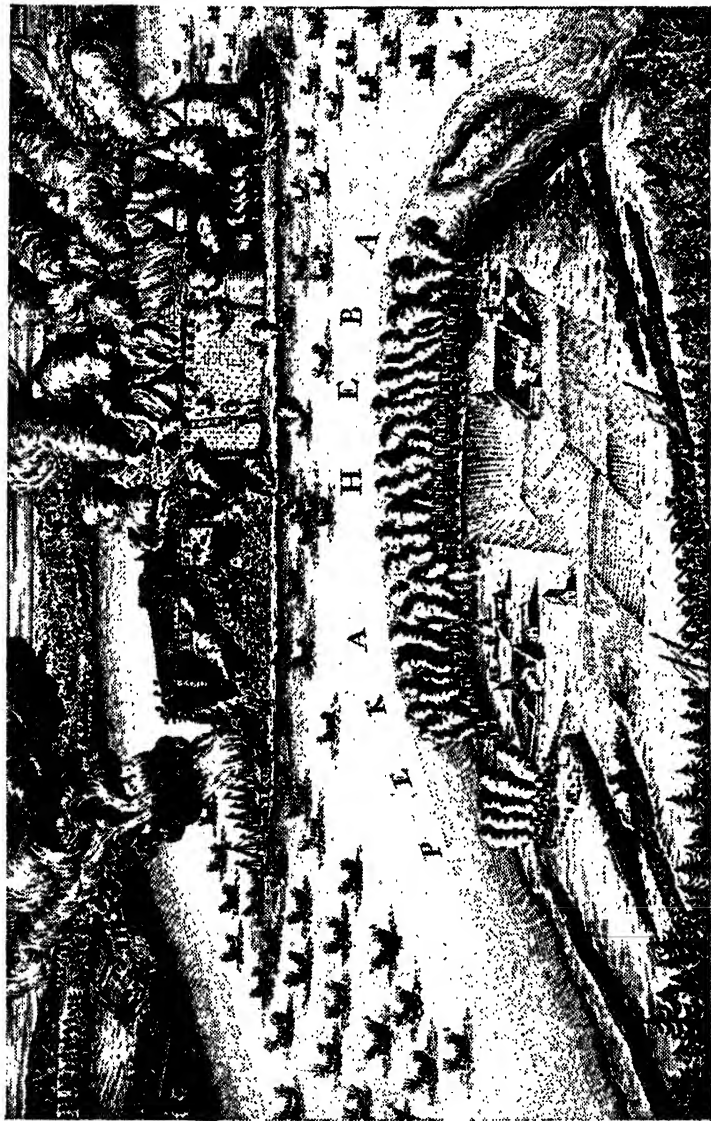
To make good the loss of his artillery he ordered the bells removed from some of the churches and cast into guns (they were made of bronze in those days). Within a year he had 300 new guns, approximately twice as many as he had lost at Narva. In place of the noblemen's

mounted levy and the Streltsi he built up a large army of dragoon and infantry regiments after the Western European model. The complement was maintained by recruitment, a fixed number of peasant households being obliged to furnish one recruit. Each enlistment provided from 30,000 to 40,000 recruits, who were first trained in special camps and then assigned to various regiments. This system of army replacements was several decades ahead of the system used in Western Europe, which was based chiefly on the employment of mercenaries. The Russian army had closer ties with the people. The nobles were also made to begin their service in the army from the ranks; only afterwards were they commissioned as officers in the guards or line regiments. Only the old and the disabled were allowed to retire from the army.

The first military reforms were accomplished with such speed that in 1701 the Russian army was ready to take the field. A corps under the command of Sheremetev twice defeated Swedish forces and occupied almost all of Liflandia. In 1703 Russian troops stormed and captured the fortress of Marienburg and the following year took Dorpat and Narva. Meanwhile Peter was conducting successful operations in Ingria (on the left bank of the Neva). In the autumn of 1702 he captured the Swedish fortress of Nöteborg, which had been built on the site of the old Novgorod town of Oreshek at the source of the Neva at Lake Ladoga. In a letter to Moscow announcing the capture of Nöteborg-Oreshek, Peter, punning the word Oreshek, which in Russian is synonymous with "nut," wrote: "Truly this was a hard nut, but it has happily been cracked, thank God." Peter renamed this fortress Schlüsselsburg, *i.e.*, key city, for it provided an exit from Lake Ladoga. Advancing down the Neva, Peter captured another Swedish fortress, Nyenskans, in the spring of 1703; this fortress was situated on the right bank of the Neva not far from the sea. In May of the same year he laid the cornerstone of the Fortress of Peter and Paul near this spot. Some wooden houses built nearby were the beginnings of the city of St. Petersburg.

Peter hastened to fortify himself on the Neva River, which provided an outlet into the Baltic. Construction of the fortress of Kronslott (later known as Kronstadt) was begun on Kotlin Island near the mouth of the Neva. A shipyard (the Svirskaya) was built on Lake Ladoga, and its first ship slid down the ways in the selfsame year of 1703. Peter was making intensive preparations for a naval war against Sweden.

Peter thus took excellent advantage of Charles' mistake in underestimating the fighting qualities of the Russian army and in transferring his main forces to Poland for several years. During this time the reorganized Russian army, having received a school of training in victories over the Swedes, was growing strong.



The capture of Nöteborg (Schlüsselburg) in 1702. An engraving of the 18th century



## 5. THE CONDITION OF THE PEASANTS UNDER PETER THE GREAT. POPULAR UPRISINGS

**Hard Plight of the Peasantry.** The big successes in consolidating the nobles' state were achieved at the cost of tremendous sacrifices on the part of the masses of the people, particularly the peasants. State expenditures had increased several times over within a short period. Money was needed for the construction of a navy, the purchase of weapons abroad, and the maintenance of a large new army. "Money is the sinews of war," Peter said. Within a few years taxes were raised fivefold. Taxes were levied on bees, bathhouses, salt, the sale of cucumbers, oak coffins and the like. Special revenue officers called "*pribylshchiki*" were instituted with the express function of discovering new sources of taxation. Peter prohibited the wearing of beards and moustaches in the towns, but made an exception for those who purchased exemption at the price of a tax; the latter were given copper tokens as tax receipts. The peasants were allowed to wear beards in the villages, but upon entering or leaving town they also had to pay a special fee.

No less burdensome were the miscellaneous services imposed upon the peasants and the craftsmen. Almost every year recruitment absorbed tens of thousands of men who never returned home, except for a small number of disabled soldiers. The peasants were compelled to furnish horses for the transportation of military supplies, to repair bridges, build roads, dig canals, etc.

The lot of the serf peasants was a wretched one, for in addition to paying state taxes they were obliged to render service to their landlords. The expenses of the nobles were growing rapidly at that period. The nobles spent practically all their lives in military or civil service. Those residing in the capital built houses, furnished them luxuriously and spent a good deal on entertainment. The nobles tried to cover their increased expenditures at the expense of their peasants. Through their overseers and bailiffs they kept a watchful eye on the lives of their peasants. If a peasant's living conditions showed signs of improvement new exactions were immediately imposed on him. There was even a saying among the landlords: "Don't let the peasant grow shaggy but shear him naked like a sheep."

The difficult conditions under which the peasants, the lower strata of the Cossacks and the town population lived, led to a series of new uprisings.

**The Uprising in Astrakhan.** The first large uprising took place in Astrakhan. Every year the opening of the navigation season attracted a large number of people to Astrakhan seeking work in the salt and fishing industries. The heavy taxes particularly affected the poor people, and were a cause of discontent and unrest among the pop-



Disc testifying to the payment of the tax for wearing a beard. *Photo*

ulation. On the night of July 30, 1705, a revolt broke out among the Streltsi and the lower strata of the townsfolk. The waywodes and most of the people in authority were killed. But the more prosperous merchants quickly seized power in the town and a "council of elders" was elected from among their number. With the help of the local garrisons and residents the rebels captured several towns on the Yaik (Ural), Terek and Volga rivers. Attempts were made to stir up the Cossacks of the Don, but these attempts ended in failure. In Cherkassk the well-to-do Cossacks arrested the delegates who had come from Astrakhan. Troops under Field Marshal Sheremetev were sent out against the rebellious population of Astrakhan. Discord arose among the rebels. The well-to-do merchants and the Metropolitan sent a delegation to the tsar to plead for mercy, but the poor gathered at a meeting which resolved not to give up the town. Astrakhan was taken after a bombardment in March 1706. The Astrakhan uprising thus lasted almost eight months.

**The Uprising of 1707-1708.** The Astrakhan outbreak had barely come to an end when a more formidable rising broke out on the Don under the leadership of Ataman Kondrati Bulavin. After the capture of Azov, various services and duties, including military service, had been imposed on the Don Cossacks. The government laid ever-growing restraints on Cossack autonomy, the existence of an independent Cossack force being regarded as a political menace. This aroused discontent among well-to-do Cossackdom of the Lower Don. Since the end of the 17th century a vast number of fugitive peasants from the southern districts had been drifting toward the Upper Don area. The Raskolniks (dissenters) fleeing religious persecution also

sought refuge here. The landlords of the southern districts constantly complained to the government that their peasants were running away. At the close of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries the government sent several punitive expeditions to the Don, which hunted down fugitive peasants and sacked the Cossack towns where they had settled. Exceptional brutality was displayed by a punitive force under Prince Yuri Dolgoruki. One autumn night in 1707, when Dolgoruki's detachment had pitched camp for the night in a Cossack village on the Aidar River, the poor, led by Ataman Kondrati Bulavin, wiped it out.

The uprising spread quickly among the Cossacks of the Upper Don and then to the workers of the Voronezh shipyards. In the Tambov and Kozlov districts the serf peasants attacked the estates of their landlords and then left to join the Cossacks. The uprising thus became a peasant as well as a Cossack movement. After a reverse in battle Bulavin left for Zaporozhye to rouse the Ukrainian Cossacks. There, however, he met with opposition from the wealthy Cossacks. But despite the prohibition of their hetman, the Zaporozhye rank-and-file poor Cossacks made their way to the Don in groups and joined the uprising.

In the spring of 1708 Bulavin returned to the upper reaches of the Don. The spontaneous uprising had by this time spread over a large area. Hastily mustering the rebel detachments, Bulavin led them to the town of Cherkassk, the administrative centre of the Don Cossacks. The well-to-do Cossacks of the Lower Don were also discontented with the actions of the tsarist government, but they were afraid of the poor. When the Cossack ataman tried to check the advance of the rebels, the majority of the Cossacks of his detachment deserted to Bulavin's side without giving battle. The rank-and-file Cossacks had agreed among themselves to fire blank cartridges at Bulavin's men. The inhabitants of the Cossack villages met him with bread and salt, to show that he was welcome. Bulavin encountered no strong resistance and easily captured Cherkassk.

Although the wealthy Cossacks acknowledged Bulavin as their ataman, they secretly conspired against him. Bulavin was not sufficiently resolute in fighting the enemy. He tarried in Cherkassk while the tsarist government was making urgent preparations to crush the uprising. The government held the fortress of Azov, situated not far from Cherkassk. Bulavin let the time for a sudden attack on Azov slip by, and when he finally attempted to capture it after having spent two months in Cherkassk, he failed. The wealthy Cossacks promptly took advantage of this and rose against him in Cherkassk. They surrounded Bulavin's house, but he fought them off for a long time. Then, rather than fall into the enemy's hands alive, he shot himself.

After Bulavin's death, rebel detachments under the command of atamans Khokhlach, Drany, Goly and others continued to operate in

many places along the Lower Volga and the upper reaches of the Don and the Donets rivers. Proclamations issued by Bulavin and his atamans were secretly circulated among the people. "We are not after the common people, we are after the boyars who do wrong," wrote Ataman Goly. In response to these appeals, new revolts broke out among the masses. On the Volga Bulavin's adherents took Tsaritsyn (now Stalingrad) and approached Saratov. The tsarist government was alarmed at the prospect of Bulavin's detachments penetrating to the Middle Volga area, where revolt was fomenting among the Bashkirs. Sporadic outbreaks among the peasantry had occurred in various parts of the country: near Smolensk, at Nizhni Novgorod, along the upper reaches of the Volga, in Karelia, in the northern regions and elsewhere.

The government sent a large punitive army under Prince Vasili Dolgoruki to the Don and the Lower Volga. The scattered rebel detachments could not hold out for long against the tsarist regulars. Prince Dolgoruki slaughtered almost all the adult males in the area of the uprising. By the end of 1708 the main insurgent districts were suppressed and occupied by the royal troops.

**The Uprising of the Bashkirs.** Outbreaks among the Bashkirs had occurred as early as in 1704, three years before the Don uprising. The chief cause was the seizure of Bashkirian lands by Russian landlords and the imposition of new burdensome taxes. The Bashkirs testified that they were even taxed for having black or grey eyes. They refused to pay the taxes and did not permit the revenue officers to come on their lands to take a census. In the following year sporadic unrest broke out into open rebellion, and the Bashkirs crossed to the right bank of the Kama and stirred up the Tatar, Cheremissi (Mari), Votyak (Udmurt) and Chuvash peoples. The rich *batyrs* (feudal nobles), prominent among them Aldar and Kusyum, took over the leadership of the uprising. They hoped to set up a separate Bashkir state as a vassal of the Crimea or Turkey. In the spring of 1708 the Bashkirs were severely defeated by tsarist troops. Many of the *batyrs*, including Kusyum, then deserted the uprising. Isolated operations by insurgent Bashkirs continued for several more years.

By 1711 the tsarist government had suppressed the popular movements everywhere.

## 6. THE END OF THE WAR WITH SWEDEN; THE WARS OF PETER THE GREAT IN THE EAST

**The Campaign of Charles XII Against Russia.** Charles XII did not defeat Augustus II until 1706, when he compelled him to conclude peace. The Swedes now had only one opponent: Russia. At the end of 1707 the Swedish army marched towards the Russian frontier. The following summer Charles reached the Dnieper at Mogilev.

Peter expected the Swedish king to march on Moscow, but the latter, who had learned that the Russian army was of a different mettle to the one he had engaged at Narva, did not risk such an undertaking. From Mogilev he turned south, to the Ukraine. There he planned to give his army a rest, replenish his food supplies and await reinforcements from Sweden. Besides, the hetman of the Ukraine, Ivan Mazepa, was carrying on a secret correspondence with Charles and planning treason. He assured Charles that as soon as the Swedish forces appeared in the Ukraine an uprising against Peter would flare up. Mazepa's plans, however, fell through. In the autumn of 1708 Peter annihilated the Swedish relief army under Lewenhaupt. The encounter took place near the village of Lesnaya on the Sozh River (east of the Dnieper) while Lewenhaupt was on his way to join Charles with a large baggage train. Hetman Mazepa went over to Charles with a small detachment of Cossack elders. The Ukrainian population, however, far from supporting the traitor Mazepa, began a guerilla war against the Swedes. This placed the Swedes in still greater difficulties—they were faced with the menace of starvation, since they could not receive food supplies from a hostile population.

In April 1709 Charles reached the small fortress of Poltava and laid siege to it. Once this fortress was taken the Swedes would have before them an open road to Moscow and Voronezh, where food supplies for the Russian army had been concentrated. Peter also feared that the Turks would violate the peace terms and render the Swedes assistance by way of Azov.

**The Victory at Poltava.** Peter hurried to the rescue of Poltava with the main forces of his army. The decisive engagement between the Russian and Swedish armies took place on June 27, 1709, on the bank of the Vorskla River in the vicinity of Poltava. On the eve of the battle Peter's order was read to the Russian troops:

"Men! The hour is at hand that will decide the fate of our country. And so, do not imagine that you are fighting for Peter, you are fighting for the kingdom entrusted to Peter, for your family and your native country. Be not daunted by the enemy's fame, who is alleged to be invincible, for it is a lie which you have repeatedly proven by your own victories. As for Peter, know ye that he does not hold his life dear, so long as Russia lives in joy and fame to your own well-being. . . ."

The Swedes opened the battle with a fierce attack on the Russian positions. The wounded King Charles spurred on his men with words of encouragement as he was carried around his ranks on a stretcher. But all the efforts of the Swedes to break the resistance of the Russian regiments were in vain. Hand-to-hand fighting lasted two hours. Peter's life was constantly in danger; his hat and his saddle were riddled with bullets. The onslaught of the Russians was so fierce that the Swedes broke ranks and fled.



Battle of Poltava. Mosaic picture. The work of M. V. Lomonosov

Only a small body of Swedish cavalry headed by Charles and Mazepa escaped from their pursuers and fled to Turkey. The rest of the Swedish army surrendered. Altogether about 20,000 prisoners were taken, including all of Charles' generals.

The brilliant Russian victory at Poltava was of tremendous significance. The Swedes were considered the best troops in Europe and Charles an invincible general. Swedish military glory had been dealt a severe blow. Poland and Denmark again entered into an alliance with Russia to continue the war against Sweden. Prussia also joined this alliance.

**The War with Turkey.** Charles, who had fled to Turkey after his defeat, incited her against Russia, upon whom she declared war in 1710. Peter immediately marched toward the Danube with an army of 40,000; he counted on the assistance of the Polish army and on an uprising among the Slav population under Turkish domination. However, a large Turkish army (about 200,000 men) advancing toward the Russian border surrounded the Russian troops under Peter at the Pruth in 1711. The Russian army lacked provisions and sufficient ammunition. But the Turkish commander-in-chief, not suspecting the difficult straits the Russian army was in, agreed to conclude peace.

Though under the peace terms Peter returned Azov to Turkey he had managed to save his army.

**The End of the Swedish War.** After the Turkish war, Peter again turned his attention to Sweden. In the years immediately following the Battle of Poltava the Russian army had completely ousted the Swedes from the coasts of the Gulf of Riga and the Gulf of Finland. In Pomerania (on the southern shore of the Baltic Sea), the Russians were operating against the Swedes jointly with the Prussians and the Danes.

Peter's main efforts were directed at permanently securing the Baltic seaboard for Russia. Under his command the young Russian navy won a brilliant victory over the Swedish fleet off Cape Hangö udde (Finland) in 1714.

Peter's infantry, embarked on galleys, drew alongside the Swedish ships in the face of heavy cannon fire. The Russian soldiers boarded the enemy ships by means of ladders and captured them after a fierce hand-to-hand mêlée.

This naval defeat forced Charles to enter into peace negotiations with Russia, but they were broken off after his death. The Swedish government decided to make peace with Prussia, Denmark and Poland and to concentrate all its forces against Russia. The Russians won another great victory over the Swedish fleet in 1720 off the Island of Grönhamn. After having in the course of the 13th to the 17th centuries been cut off from the Black and Baltic seas, Russia within a few years became a great naval power. Supremacy of the Russian fleet on

the Baltic Sea enabled the Russian army to invade Sweden and even to appear in the neighbourhood of Stockholm.

A peace treaty was finally signed in Nystad, Finland, in 1721. Russia received the coasts of the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Riga: part of Karelia (including Vyborg), Ingria, Esthland (including Narva and Revel) and Liflandia (including Riga).

The victory over Sweden was of tremendous significance for Russia. The lack of convenient seaboard had retarded the country's economic development. Livonia, and then Sweden, had deliberately deprived Russia of every opportunity not only of trading but also of maintaining cultural relations with Western Europe. Peter secured a footing on the Baltic Sea and thus brought to a conclusion the struggle of the Russian people for the seacoast, a struggle which they had been waging since the end of the 15th century. Peter took only what was absolutely essential for Russia's normal development.

After the conclusion of the Treaty of Nystad, the Senate bestowed on Peter the title of emperor, and Russia became officially known as the Russian empire. This new name testified to the growth of the power and strength of the Russian state.

**Relations with the East.** Despite the prolonged war with Sweden which entailed heavy expenditure and effort, Peter did not lose sight of Russia's eastern frontiers. In southwestern Siberia the Russians between 1715 and 1720 occupied the entire upper reaches of the Irtysh. A considerable number of small fortresses, including Omsk and Semipalatinsk, was built on the banks of this river. The Upper Irtysh was the starting point of an ancient caravan route to Bokhara and Khiva. The Russian government simultaneously made preparations to invade Central Asia from the Caspian Sea. In 1716 a detachment under Prince Bekovich-Cherkassky was sent to Khiva ostensibly to congratulate the khan on his accession to the throne but actually to obtain economic and military-political information about Khiva and Bokhara. The detachment was surrounded in the steppes and almost totally annihilated. This failure temporarily checked the advance of the Russians beyond the Caspian Sea.

Peter also endeavoured to entrench himself on the western shore of the Caspian. This was highly important for the strengthening of Russian influence in Transcaucasia and Persia, with whom trade was developing rapidly at the beginning of the 18th century. Russia used the pillaging of Russian merchants during an uprising in Shemakha (in Azerbaijan) against the rule of Persia as a pretext to send a military expedition to the western shore of the Caspian.

Peter himself took part in the campaign, which began in 1722, soon after the conclusion of peace with Sweden. Russia found support in Transcaucasia among the feudal lords of Azerbaijan, Eastern Georgia and Armenia as well as among the local tradesmen and the



clergy. Their friendliness toward the Russian troops was due to their fear of Turkey, who strove to seize the entire Caucasus. The peace treaty with Persia signed in 1723 gave Russia the western shore of the Caspian including Derbent and Baku, and the southern shore, including Astrabad. Russia, however, was unable to retain these lands and soon abandoned them to Persia.

## 7. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN RUSSIA AND PETER'S ECONOMIC POLICY

**The Development of Manufacturing.** Russia's poorly-developed industry made her dependent upon Western Europe. "When Peter the Great, having to deal with the more advanced countries of the West, began feverishly to build factories and workshops in order to supply his armies and to strengthen the defences of the country, it was a peculiar attempt on his part to escape from the grip of backwardness." \*

At the beginning of the 18th century the petty craftsmen were no longer able to satisfy the steadily increasing demands of the home market. Many articles that Russia did not produce had to be imported from Holland, England, Sweden and other countries. The war with Sweden severely hampered this trade. Meanwhile the army needed woollens and boots, as well as muskets, guns, gunpowder and other military equipment.

Peter promoted the development of manufacturing and granted the owners of manufactories extensive privileges. Since it was particularly important to introduce the manufacture of goods that were supplied by import, he permitted foreigners to set up manufactories, and invited foreign technical experts to Russia, with whose assistance he established government manufactories which were subsequently turned over to commercial companies.

Serious difficulties were encountered in acquiring labour-power. Only an insignificant number of freemen came to work in the manufactories, and the merchants who owned the majority of the establishments did not possess any serfs. Hence a decree was issued in 1721 permitting the purchase of entire villages of peasants on condition that they be permanently attached to the manufactories and not sold apart from them. These peasants came to be called "possessional" peasants. In addition to their work in the manufactories they had to till the land.

Manufacturing made great advances under Peter. The production of woollens, linens and leather increased many times over. There was

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\* Stalin, "Speech delivered at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) on November 19, 1928." (*Leninism*, Vol. II, page 73, Moscow 1933.)

an especially large increase in the production of pig iron. A number of new industries was established, notably copper smelting, shipbuilding and silk weaving.

A large number of state-owned metallurgical works was built in the Urals. Factories were also founded there by Nikita Demidov, a former gunsmith from Tula. Ekaterinburg (now Sverdlovsk), the administrative centre of the Urals, subsequently became a major iron and steel town.

By the end of Peter's reign there were about 240 manufactories in Russia. The majority were small and did not survive long; only a few developed, and these formed a cornerstone for the further rise of manufacturing in the country.

The conditions of the manufactory workers were extremely bad. The proprietors treated them as serfs, paid them a miserable wage and subjected them to brutal and degrading punishments. The first disorders and the first strike broke out as early as in the twenties of the 18th century at the Moscow Cloth Manufactory.

**The Mercantile System.** Practically the whole output of the Russian factories was consumed within the country. Raw materials and agricultural products continued to be exported. Following the conquest of the Baltic seaboard, commerce with Western Europe passed chiefly through the Baltic ports, instead of through Archangel. In November 1703 the first foreign merchant ship carrying a cargo for Russia sailed up to the mouth of the Neva. In 1724, St. Petersburg was visited by about 200 foreign ships.

To facilitate the transportation of goods to St. Petersburg from Central Russia, Peter built the Vyshne-Volochok Canal linking the Tvertsa, a tributary of the Volga, with the Msta, which empties into Lake Ilmen. This created a direct water route between the Volga and the Baltic Sea. Work was started on the Ladoga Canal, to bypass the stormy Lake Ladoga, but it was not completed until after Peter's death.

Peter's government attached great importance to the accumulation of money in the country through foreign trade, and was interested in creating a favourable trade balance. The difference between the value of exports and imports remained in the country in the form of foreign coinage which was reminted into Russian currency. High tariffs were introduced to restrict imports. The government did its utmost to curtail or even completely prohibit the import of articles which were being produced by the Russian manufactories, in this way protecting the young Russian industry from competition against the more developed industries of Western Europe. This government policy of reckoning the country's wealth by its monetary accumulations was known as the mercantile system. This economic policy was prosecuted by European countries in the 17th and 18th centuries.

**The Poll Tax.** The trade excises and the numerous petty imposts were not sufficient to cover the steadily increasing expenditures of the state. Huge funds were required for the maintenance of the large army. People quitted their homes to escape the burden of taxation, arrears of which grew from year to year. In view of this Peter decided to substitute the multitude of petty taxes collected from the peasants and the townsfolk by a single heavy poll tax, to be levied on the basis of capitation and not on the assessment of acreage, as in the 16th century, or per peasant household.

The introduction of the poll tax necessitated the taking of a new census. First the population itself supplied the required information, which was then verified by the authorities. This came to be known as the "first revision." Periodical revisions (approximately every fifteen years) were carried out by generals and officers attended by army detachments, who dealt harshly with people who tried to evade the census or who gave false information. The poll tax for a landlord's peasant was fixed at 74 kopeks a year (in addition the peasant had to pay the landlord about 50 kopeks); for state-owned peasants and for the tradesmen and artisans the tax was 1 ruble and 20 kopeks (the equivalent of ten gold rubles in late 19th century currency).

**The Peasants.** The poll tax had an important effect on the status of the peasants. The rural population now formed two main categories. All the peasants, *kholopi* (house serfs) and freemen who lived on the estates of private landowners became the latter's serfs. The separate category of *kholopi* went out of existence. The rural population living on crown lands came to be called state peasants. The poll tax further increased the power of the landlords over the peasants. The landlords and bailiffs were made responsible for punctual payment of the tax by their serfs. It was in Peter's reign that the sale of serfs apart from the land began to be widely practised.

**The Situation in the Towns; the Merchantry.** Formerly the urban population had suffered greatly from the arbitrary rule of the waywodes. Peter wished to provide better conditions for the development of trade and to bolster up the urban economy. To this end he carried out a complete reform of municipal administration. The residents of every town were divided into the categories of "regular" citizens (merchants, artists, doctors, craftsmen) and the "base born" (i.e., the "lower" people, or common labourers and craftsmen who were not guild members). The "regular" citizens comprised two guilds: the first was made up of the wealthy merchants, the intelligentsia (doctors, apothecaries, artists) and some of the master craftsmen; the second guild consisted of petty tradesmen, craftsmen and apprentices. The "regular" citizens discussed municipal affairs at meetings and from their midst elected burgomasters to administer the town. All the ben-

efits of municipal reform were reaped by the upper stratum of the merchantry.

Peter attached great importance to the big merchants, who controlled foreign and domestic trade. He conferred various privileges on them and granted them loans. The merchants received government contracts and frequently gave the tsar advice on various economic matters. Peter did his utmost to interest the merchants in investing capital in industry.

**The Nobles.** Important changes took place in the status of the nobles during Peter's reign. In the 17th century the nobles had been awarded fiefs in temporary tenure as payment for their services. Peter substituted these fiefs by money payments. All the land held in tenure by the nobles—including patrimonies and fiefs—became their absolute property and now came to be called "estates." The differences that had existed between the patrimonies and the fiefs in the 16th and 17th centuries were completely effaced. To keep the estates intact when they were passed on by inheritance—for their division usually led to the impoverishment of the nobles—Peter in 1714 issued an edict establishing the principle of primogeniture for the inheritance of realty. The children who remained without an inheritance were to live on the salary they received for their service. Many nobles were opposed to this law, however, and in 1730 they had it repealed.

Under Peter the difference between the ancient peerage and the newer nobility was further mitigated. Both became known as the gentry or the nobility. The nobles' state now was in need of a large number of officers and officials. In the 17th century nobles had evaded military service under various pretexts. Many spent all their lives on their patrimonies and estates. When summoned they either contrived to bribe the summoner or fled to the woods; many pretended to be infirm and sick. Peter insisted that no less than two-thirds of the nobility enter military service and one-third the civil service.

## 8. REFORMS IN STATE ADMINISTRATION

**Central Administration.** The old administrative system was utterly dislocated during the war with Sweden. The inherent weakness of the state machinery was revealed both by the war and by the struggle against the uprisings in Astrakhan, on the Don and in Bashkiria. Peter had no confidence in the boyar дума ruled by members of the ancient princely and boyar families who viewed the tsar's activities with disfavour and looked askance at the "new" men, such as Alexander Menshikov, who was of humble origin, or Shafirov, Yaguzhinsky, Sheremetev and others. At the very outset of his reign Peter had begun to settle important problems by consultation with his intimate assistants, without recourse to the boyar дума. The дума was not even

able to convene all its members, for Peter made no exception for the boyars in the matter of government service and gave them commissions to various towns and sent them to the wars. Instead of the ukases with their customary preamble "The tsar has decreed and the boyars have confirmed," Peter issued fiats in his name alone.

The old Moscow *prikazi* could not handle the immensely increased volume of business demanding prompt decisions and action. Confusion reigned in these offices, which frequently overlapped each other. Peter and his assistants fully realized the shortcomings of the Russian institutions and strove to utilize the experience of the advanced countries of Europe. During his sojourn abroad Peter had acquainted himself with the organization of European institutions. He sent his officials to various countries to study them and invited foreign officials to Russia. Before adopting western models of government organization, Peter had his officials ascertain to what extent they were applicable under Russian conditions.

In this manner the Russian state system under Peter was brought closer to that of the advanced countries of Europe.

When Peter set out to wage war against Turkey in 1711 he left behind in the capital a special commission consisting of nine members appointed by him which he named the Governing Senate. The Senate, which was to attend to affairs during the tsar's absence from the capital, made the boyar *duma* superfluous. The rest of the time the Senate acted as the supreme organ of government, exercising a supervision over all government institutions. It drafted new laws and submitted them to the tsar for approval. The office of Procurator-General under the Senate was instituted. Peter called the Procurator-General "the royal eye." In 1718 nine "colleges" were formed in place of the old *prikazi*. Their number was subsequently increased to twelve. The functions of the colleges were clearly defined, each having charge of a particular branch of the administration. The College of Foreign Affairs handled relations with other countries. The War and Admiralty Colleges had charge respectively of the army and the navy. Others were in charge of state finances, trade, the factories and mining. All juridical affairs in the realm were under the jurisdiction of the College of Justice. Administration of the towns was concentrated in the chief magistracy.

Many of the prelates of the church disapproved of Peter's reforms. Peter decided to subordinate the church completely to the state. He regarded the church as a part of the state apparatus and the clergy as a species of officialdom. To deprive the church of its independence Peter abolished the patriarchate and placed the Synod, or Spiritual College at the head of church administration. The church was thereby subordinated to the sovereign temporal power.

By means of these reforms Peter built up a strong state apparatus to serve the needs of the ruling classes. Strict centralization was es-

tablished, and a body of officials obedient to the tsar created. The same aim was pursued in the reforms introduced into the regional institutions.

**Regional Institutions.** Big changes were effected in the system of regional administration. In 1708 Peter divided the country into eight *gubernias*, or governments. Each *gubernia* was administered by a governor directly subordinate to the supreme authority, which made for greater centralization. Originally the *gubernias* were very large. In 1719, fifty provinces of approximately the same size were formed. The provinces in turn were subdivided into smaller administrative units. A completely uniform administrative system was thus established throughout the vast territory of the realm. Certain branches of administration (the courts, collection of taxes) were set up as separate institutions under the control of the waywodes and the governors.

**The Army and the Navy.** The protracted war with Sweden, who possessed the best army in Europe, was a stern but splendid school for the Russian army. All the deficiencies in the system of army replacement, supply and training were revealed early in the war. Peter with amazing expedition, persistence and skill made use of the lessons of the war to effect a complete reorganization of the army. Peter closely studied military organization in the western countries and that of his enemy, the Swedes, from whom he borrowed the best that fighting experience had vindicated. In reorganizing the Russian army, however, he did not blindly copy the foreign models, but used independent judgment, choosing what had been tried out and verified by his own experience. In distinction to foreign armies, which were in most cases maintained at fighting strength by means of mercenary units, Peter introduced a system of military service by the population by means of recruitments. The Russian army became a



A soldier-grenadier of the times of Peter I firing a mortar. *Exhibition of clothes of Russian warriors*

regular force, uniformly equipped and armed, well trained and hardened in battle.

In the 17th century the troops of Muscovy had gone into battle in large, unwieldy masses. Peter adopted the system used in the French army as the basis for the battle formation of his troops. On the battlefield the soldiers were arrayed in ranks, the front ranks firing while those behind them reloaded. The bayonet fixed to the rifle made its first appearance, thereby increasing the importance of hand-to-hand fighting. The Russian battle array, however, had this distinguishing trait, that each regiment had its own battalion in the second line which always ensured support to the first line.

Peter, under the prevailing conditions of linear tactics, was able to create deep-line formations. The second line of Russian formation acquired an independent tactical designation. All this was a great step forward in the development of linear tactics.

Peter's strategic art is deserving of attention. Peter demanded that military operations should conform to circumstances. Battle he regarded as the main object which required thorough and careful preparation. He trained the Russian soldiers to display independence and initiative. In a letter to Sheremetev Peter wrote: "It seems you dare not take a step without our instruction. . . . And that is like the servant who will not save his drowning master until he finds out whether the contract says that he may."

The cavalry in Peter's army was the chief attacking force, and was therefore reinforced by a horse-drawn regimental artillery.

Appreciating the importance of material resources in the building up of a country's armed forces Peter created a sound economic foundation for the army and navy by developing the metallurgical and metal-working industries. The development of industry enabled him to considerably improve the Russian artillery. The ordnance under Peter acquired greater mobility, the Russian horse-drawn artillery appearing fifty years in advance of the West. The Articles of War, published in 1716, clearly stipulate the place which the artillery occupies both on the march and in battle. Peter made a great step forward in developing the elements of coordination between infantry, cavalry, engineer corps and artillery. The army of Peter the Great possessed its Regulations and a system of military training. The commanding staff received a training in special schools and guards regiments. For this purpose Peter set up in Moscow a nautical school and medical school. In St. Petersburg a naval academy and artillery school were opened. Technical and mathematical schools were also founded.

As a result of the military reforms, Russia by the end of Peter's reign possessed a large standing army whose fighting qualities were in no way inferior to the best troops in Europe. Besides the Cossacks, it numbered up to 200,000 men formed into approximately 130 regiments.

Before Peter's day Russia had not had a single warship. At Peter's death the Baltic fleet consisted of 48 large sailing vessels and a multitude of galleys. The Russian navy became one of the most powerful in Europe. Russian sailors covered themselves with undying glory by their victories over the Swedish navy.

In the 17th century boyars had simultaneously fulfilled the functions of army commanders, tax collectors and judges. Peter drew a line between military service and the civil service. In 1722 a "table of ranks" establishing a new system of promotion was issued. This table divided all military and civil officials into 14 ranks. Everyone had to begin military or civil service in the lowest rank. Whereas before Peter's day the sons of the aristocracy had immediately received the highest titles, they were now obliged to enter the Preobrazhensky or Semyonovsky guards regiments as rank-and-file soldiers and only later were commissioned as officers. No one was permitted to receive a higher rank without having first held the lower. The aim of the army reorganization was to create an armed force with which the noblesse empire could defend its borders and strengthen the power of the landlords within the country.

**Opponents of Reformation.** The changes in culture, social customs and political structure of Russia aroused opposition among the old aristocracy and a section of the clergy. The large landowners of old noble stock were loath to relinquish the old life of indolent ease and plenty and were hostile toward the "base born" men whom Peter had brought into prominence for their ability and merit.

The malcontents hoped that Prince Alexei, Peter's son by his first wife, Yevdokia Lopukhina, would abolish the innovations of his father after his death. Prince Alexei had been brought up under the influence of the clergy and his mother's relatives, who hated Peter. Alexei impatiently awaited his father's death and even hoped to incite a mutiny of the troops against him. Peter warned and urged his son several times to mend his ways. "You should love everything that advances the welfare and honour of your country," he said to him. "If my advice goes unheeded I shall disown you." Prince Alexei not only ignored his father's advice but became a traitor to his country and fled to Austria. Peter arranged the extradition of his son and then had him tried for treason by a special tribunal, which passed a sentence of death. The prince died in prison soon after. His death was a great blow to those who dreamed of a return to the old order.

## 9. CULTURE AND EDUCATION

**Cultural Advancement.** Cultural backwardness had been one of the causes of Russia's weakness in the 17th century. The new institutions could not function without an educated and competent body of men. The army needed artillery specialists and engineers. Canal construction,



shipbuilding, geological prospecting, mining and medicine all called for general education and specialized instruction. This demand could no longer be met by inviting foreign experts to Russia.

The shortage of printed books and absence of school education in the 17th century had greatly hampered the spread of literacy. Peter introduced a simplified and more readable type instead of the old church Slavonic type. Most of the books published after 1708 (with the exception of church service books) were printed in this type, which is in use to this day. In the absence of technical books in Russian, translations of foreign works were largely resorted to. Many books on a variety of technical and scientific subjects were translated, especially on mathematics, shipbuilding, fortification, architecture, warfare, etc. Numerous historical works were published.

The first Russian newspaper, the *Vedomosti*, was published in Moscow in 1703, and later in St. Petersburg. This newspaper consisted of several small sheets and contained news of important political events as well as reports on the progress of military operations. The calendar in use before Peter I had been the ecclesiastical calendar, which counted time from the supposed "day of creation" and began the new year on September 1. As of January 1, 1700, Peter I introduced the Julian Calendar (established by Julius Caesar) which was then in use in many European countries, although the more correct Gregorian Calendar (new style) already existed.

School education was first introduced during Peter's reign. Several educational institutions were founded in Moscow and St. Petersburg which gave instruction in mathematics, navigation, gunnery and medicine. Only children of the nobility were admitted to the schools. General schools for children of nobles, officials and clerks were opened in the provincial towns. These schools accepted children between the ages of 10 and 15, and taught them reading and writing, arithmetic and elementary geometry. The system of tuition was very severe.

In 1702 a troupe of foreign actors headed by Johann Kunst was invited to Moscow. A wooden "Palace of Comedies" was built, in which Kunst's troupe gave performances for Moscow audiences. At Peter's request the theatre performed *A Triumphant Comedy on the Taking of Oreshek*.

The changes in life and customs were confined almost exclusively to the nobility, particularly the upper circles. Peter fully realized the importance of culture as a means of strengthening the noblesse realm. He insisted that all nobles between the ages of 10 and 15 take up studies and even prohibited the marriage of nobles who had not finished school. Adolescents of the nobility had to undergo "inspections," at which their progress was reviewed. In outward appearance too the nobles of Peter's day differed markedly from their fathers and grandfathers. The long-skirted Muscovite costume was superseded by the short European

jacket, with its complement of powdered wig, cocked hat and high boots. Many of the nobles whom Peter had sent abroad borrowed the manners and tastes of the nobility of Western Europe. Social gatherings, then known as "assemblies," which were attended by the nobles' families including the womenfolk, became the mode. On holidays the capital became the scene of elaborate masquerades and merry-making that lasted several days.

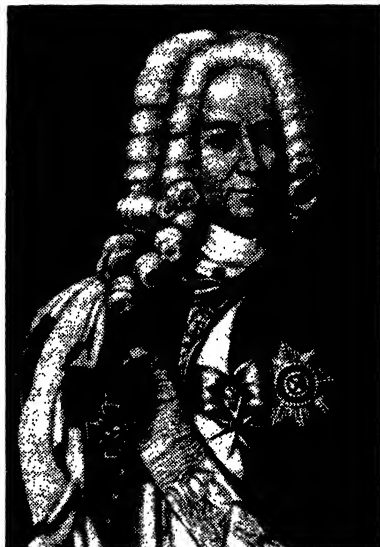
#### **Peter the Great's Assistants.**

Most of the nobles, who realized the necessity of reforms for the strengthening of the state, supported Peter. Many of Peter's most active assistants both in military affairs and civil administration came from the nobility. Yet in choosing talented and devoted assistants Peter did not limit himself to the nobility; he also advanced men "from among the very basest born." These men subsequently became nobles, acquired extensive estates and trampled upon the people in the old nobles' way.

Procurator-General Yaguzhinsky was said to have been a swineherd in his youth. Shafirov, a Jew, who was in charge of foreign affairs, had been a shop assistant. Peter's closest assistant was Alexander Danilovich Menshikov, who was said to have been a vendor of meat pies in his childhood. Menshikov joined one of the "sham" regiments, went abroad with the tsar and worked with him in the shipyards. Peter liked Menshikov for his acumen, efficiency and courage, and put him in charge of military affairs. But Peter was aware of Menshikov's shortcomings and in private used his stick on him more than once to teach him not to dip into the treasury.

Public initiative found a supporter in Peter.

The tsar had public-spirited assistants among various strata of the population, many of whom at their own initiative submitted memoranda suggesting reforms. An example is Ivan Pososhkov, a well-to-do peasant of a palace village near Moscow. Pososhkov had travelled extensively about the country as a tradesman and was well acquainted with its life. He wrote a work entitled "*On poverty and Wealth*" and dedicated it to Peter. In this book he expounded his views on various



A. D. Menshikov.  
*From an old portrait*

problems of economics and state organization, devoting particular attention to commerce. He was unable, however, to bring his work to Peter's notice. After the tsar's death Pososhkov was arrested for his sharp criticism of the nobility, and he died in prison.

**St. Petersburg.** In 1712 the city of St. Petersburg, founded by Peter, became the capital of the Russian realm. The capital was erected on the site of a dense forest where several little villages had stood. It was begun by Peter building himself a small wooden cottage on Zayachi Island hard by the Fortress of Peter and Paul, after which his intimates, followed by some of the nobles and merchants built their own houses alongside it. After the victory at Poltava Peter decided to make the new settlement the capital. Scores of thousands of peasants were driven here from all over the country to build the city. They worked up to their knees in swamp water. There were not enough spades or wheelbarrows, and sometimes the peasants had to carry earth in their shirts. Under the difficult conditions thousands died, and new thousands were sent to take their place. St. Petersburg was laid out quite differently from Moscow. Broad, straight streets were built where the forest and swamps had been cleared. Peter wanted the new capital to be built of brick and stone. Since there were not enough masons in the country he prohibited the erection of stone buildings in other towns and transferred the expert masons to Petersburg. He invited leading foreign architects and artists to beautify the city. Large stone buildings were erected along the banks of the Neva. Parks with neat paths and fountains were laid out. Opposite the Fortress of Peter and Paul a large shipyard was built. From here led a broad avenue which came to be called the Nevsky Prospect.

Moscow gradually became deserted. The nobles and the wealthy merchants left; the government offices closed down. In pursuance of Peter's instructions the northern capital quickly grew. In the space of 15 to 20 years St. Petersburg was transformed from a tiny village into a city with a population of 70,000.

**The Personality of Peter.** Peter the Great was unlike his predecessors—the Muscovite tsars—whom the people had seen only during holidays in church, dressed in costly, clumsy garments of gold brocade. Peter was no lover of showy court ceremonies and pompous speeches. Usually he dressed very simply.

Peter's predecessors had regarded it beneath their dignity to engage in any kind of labour. Peter liked to work and knew how to work. He was a man of exceptionally strong physique: he could easily unbend a horseshoe with his bare hands and forge an iron strip weighing several poods. Peter knew many trades and manual labour was a hobby of his. His thirst for knowledge was unbounded, and he was not ashamed to study all his life.

The Russian tsars used to spend much of their time in church or listening to long prayers in their chambers. Peter began his day at about five o'clock in the morning with a half-hour walk to stretch his legs. Then he sat down to listen to reports read to him by his secretary. After a light breakfast he left for the city by carriage or on horseback, and in fine weather, on foot. On such occasions his tall figure could be seen here and there in the capital. He visited the shipyard, factories, workshops and offices. After a simple dinner Peter usually again occupied himself with state affairs, and later busied himself with the lathe in his workshop. In the evening Peter frequently made calls. He visited not only his courtiers but paid informal calls on merchants, master craftsmen and sailors. All this was most unusual in the 17th and early 18th century.

Peter was a good organizer and an outstanding statesman. His predecessors did not even bother to sign the royal edicts, which were written by the scribes and clerks. Peter drafted the texts of his laws himself.

Peter was aware of the historical tasks which faced the country. He strove to implant European culture in backward Russia. However, Peter himself suffered from many of the faults common to the society of his day. His amusements were coarse, his banquets were orgies, and his temper turbulent. Even for a trifle he would sometimes chastise the offender with a heavy cudgel.

Peter hated cowardice, falsehood, hypocrisy and dishonesty. Above all he hated attachment to old usage which interfered with the country's regeneration. He strove to eliminate all backwardness: in economy, in technique, in state organization, in culture and customs. Strong-willed, resolute and persistent, Peter swept aside all the obstacles that stood in the way of his reforms. He was irreconcilable in his fight against backwardness and barbarity. "... Peter hastened the copying of western culture by barbarian Russia, and he did not hesitate to use barbarous methods in fighting against barbarism." \*

**Russia—An Empire of Landlords and Merchants.** Russia, after Peter's reformation, became a powerful European state.

A large domestic industry came into being. The Russian army and navy won fame by their victories over the Swedish forces, which had been considered the best in Europe. The administrative institutions introduced by Peter brought order and system into the realm. Notable progress was achieved in culture. Despite all his talents and his energy Peter could not, however, completely overcome the backwardness of feudal Russia.

The landholding nobility had been and remained the ruling class in Russia. Hence all the benefits of Peter's reforms were reaped prima-

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\* *Lenin, Selected Works*, Vol. VII, p. 366, Moscow 1936.

rily by the nobles, and to some extent by the nascent merchant class. All the successes in strengthening the empire of the nobility were achieved through the ruthless exploitation of the peasants. Under Peter Russia became a powerful realm of the landlords and the merchants. "... Peter the Great did a great deal to elevate the landlord class and to develop the rising merchant class. Peter did a great deal to create and strengthen the national State of the landlords and merchants. It should be added that the elevation of the landlord class, the encouragement of the rising merchant class, and the strengthening of the national State of these classes, was effected at the cost of the peasant serf who was bled white." \*

## *Chapter II*

### PETER'S SUCCESSORS (1725-1762)

#### 10. THE STRUGGLE OF THE NOBLES FOR POWER

**The Palace Coups.** During Peter's reign the nobles had grown still more powerful. The government of the country was in their hands. They possessed big estates and large numbers of serfs. They controlled an armed force—the guards regiments—in which both officers and the majority of the men were of noble origin.

After the death of Peter the nobles resident in the capital interfered in matters of succession to the throne and organized palace coups. Peter's successors, in an endeavour to secure the support of the nobles, increased their privileges still more.

During the thirty-seven years (1725-1762) following Peter's death there were five palace coups. Such successors of Peter as Anna Ivanovna and Peter III were insignificant, poorly-educated, narrow-minded people, addicted to frivolous amusements and indolence. Favourites played a tremendous role in the 18th century and eternally wrangled with each other over power and influence. Vast sums were squandered on the extravagances of court life. Such of Peter's successors as Peter II and Ivan Antonovich were emperors in name only. Chance persons ruled in their name.

**Catherine I (1725-1727).** According to a law issued by Peter I in 1722 the emperor could exercise his own judgment in his choice of a successor and annul any previous instructions for the designation

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\* Stalin, *An Interview with the German Author Emil Ludwig*, p. 3, Moscow 1932.

of an heir. This law was occasioned by Prince Alexei's treason. To the very last Peter could not make up his mind about the succession. He did not wish the throne to pass to his grandson, Prince Alexei's son, and hesitated to designate his wife, Catherine, or one of his daughters, Elizabeth or Anna. He died without having left any instructions regarding his heir.

After his death the court aristocracy assembled at the palace to decide the question of succession. A group of high dignitaries of humble origin who had been influential during Peter's reign were in favour of crowning Catherine, Peter's second wife. The guards officers present at the discussion declared that they would break the heads of the "boyars" (as they called the dignitaries of ancient lineage) if they opposed Catherine. The threat was backed by the convenient arrival at the palace of the guards regiments. Catherine became empress.

To consolidate the power of the aristocracy, the intimates of the empress set up in February 1726 a Supreme Privy Council consisting of Prince D. M. Golitsyn as a representative of an old ducal family and men who had advanced to eminence under Peter (Menshikov, Golovkin and others). Thus a compromise was arrived at between members of the old nobility and the men who had come to the fore under Peter. The empress promised not to issue any edicts without the consent of the Supreme Privy Council, to which the Senate and administrative colleges were subordinated. However, Menshikov, the favourite of the empress, who actually handled all state affairs, carried more weight than the Council itself. Desirous of ensuring the continued influence of his family in the affairs of the realm Menshikov persuaded Catherine to designate as her successor Peter Alexeyevich, Peter I's grandson, whom he planned to marry to his daughter.

**Peter II (1727-1730).** After Catherine's death Menshikov set up the twelve-year-old emperor, Peter II, at his own palace and began to rule in his name.

Menshikov's rise to power was resented by the rest of the aristocracy. He was accused of abuses and banished to his own estate and subsequently exiled to Beryozov, in Siberia. His place was taken by the Dolgoruki princes, who in turn decided to marry one of the princesses of their own family to the emperor. During the preparations for the wedding Peter II fell ill and died. With his death the male line of the Romanov dynasty came to an end.

During the reigns of Catherine I and Peter II the state system established by Peter I began to deteriorate. With the formation of the Supreme Privy Council the Senate lost its former significance. The imperial court and the higher aristocracy left St. Petersburg for Moscow during the reign of Peter II, and this doomed the new

capital to gradual decline. The strong navy built under Peter I, lying idle in the harbours, fell into decay through disrepair and neglect.

**The Privy Councillors.** After the death of Peter II supreme power was temporarily assumed by the Privy Council, which was now controlled by the old nobility (of the eight Council members six belonged to two princely families, the Golitsyns and the Dolgorukis). Prince D. M. Golitsyn, a big landowner, played an outstanding role in the Council. He was in favour of a type of state system which prevailed in European countries where power was wielded by the landed aristocracy (England, Sweden). Golitsyn wanted to introduce this system into Russia. At his suggestion the Privy Councillors offered the imperial throne to Peter I's niece, Anna Ivanovna (daughter of Tsar Ivan Alexeyevich, Peter I's brother). Anna had been married by Peter I to the Duke of Courland and had continued to live in Mittau after the duke's death. The Councillors drew up the conditions of accession, under which Anna was to make no decision on important state matters without the consent of the Supreme Privy Council. Actually all power was to be transferred to the Supreme Privy Council, i.e., to a small group of large landowners. The empress was not to declare war, conclude peace, or expend state funds without the consent of the Supreme Privy Council. The Council also was to have direct control over the guards. Anna, desiring to become empress of Russia, accepted the conditions and wrote: "I promise to adhere unreservedly to everything."

The Councillors' plan to limit the power of the empress in their own favour aroused great indignation among the nobility, many of whom believed that an autocracy would be to their greater advantage. When Anna arrived in Moscow the nobles came to the palace and presented a complaint against the Councillors. The officers of the guards promised Anna their support, upon which she ordered the conditions she had signed brought to her and tore them up on the spot. The attempt of the Councillors to transfer power to the hands of the big landed aristocracy ended in complete failure. With the support of the Guards Anna became autocratic ruler of Russia.

**Anna Ivanovna (1730-1740).** The new empress was not lacking in gratitude to the nobles for their part in the *coup d'état* of 1730. Military service was made easier for them. A Cadet Corps for Nobles was founded. Upon graduation from the corps the sons of the nobles were at once commissioned as officers. The term of obligatory service for noblemen was reduced to twenty-five years. Once she had become an autocratic empress Anna Ivanovna quickly abolished the hostile Privy Council whose former members were severely dealt with.

Empress Anna occupied herself but little with state affairs. She was much addicted to amusements and pleasure, on which she spent huge

sums. The Winter Palace in Petersburg was to her a large feudal manor, and from the people around her she demanded the most abject worship.

Under Anna Ivanovna the actual power and the administration of the state were wielded by Biren, her favourite, a stupid and uneducated German nobleman whom she had brought with her from Mittau. While he was in power German nobles occupied a very influential position. They directed the foreign policy and were in command of the Russian army. The officers of two new guards regiments, the Izmailovo and the Horse regiments, were chosen mainly from among German Baltic nobles. The German nobles regarded Russia as a country where they could easily enrich themselves. Biren despised Russia and deliberately refused to study Russian. The money he extorted from the population he spent in purchasing lands for himself in Courland and clothes and jewels for his wife.

Anna's reign marked the beginning of an intensive penetration of Germans into Russia, which continued throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. This was an attempt to conquer Russia "by peaceful means," to Germanize the government apparatus, to seize control of vital state institutions, the sciences and the education of the rising generation. A mob of adventurers and impostors poured into Russia from Germany upon the heels of the statesmen and tradesmen. Many succeeded in insinuating themselves into the good graces of the wealthy nobles. As teachers and tutors in landlords' homes they strove to fill their pupils with admiration for everything German and contempt for everything Russian. The Germans tried to establish themselves firmly in Russia: they bought up fertile lands, settled them and organized large-scale farming. German capital was invested extensively in Russian industry.

The foreigners surrounding Anna Ivanovna completely disrupted the system built up by Peter I. The population groaned under the increasingly intolerable burden of taxes. Biren maintained his power by a system of brutal terror. All suspected malcontents were interrogated and tortured in the cells of the Secret Chancellery, instituted in 1731. The predominance of Germans in the central and local governments aroused the indignation of the Russian nobles who felt that they were being wronged and deprived of their right to participate in the administration of the country. Among the discontented was Minister Artyemi Petrovich Volynsky, who dreamed of putting an end to German influence over the empress and of strengthening the position of the Russian nobility. Under pressure from Biren the empress ordered Volynsky and his friends brought to the Secret Chancellery, where they were examined and tortured and then publicly executed. The sinister period of Biren's vicious rule was known among the people as the *Birenschina*.



The chief political event of Anna Ivanovna's reign was the war with Turkey and the Crimea (1735-1739) for possession of the Black Sea coast. Russia acted in league with Austria, who suffered one defeat after another. The Russian army invaded the Crimea and later captured the strong Turkish fortress of Ochakov, which barred the outlet to the sea from the Dnieper. Continuing the offensive toward the Pruth, the Russian troops defeated the Turks at the village of Stavuchany (near the town of Khotin). Under the peace treaty concluded in 1739 at Belgrade Russia received territory on both banks of the Dnieper but no outlet to the sea. This war, the aim of which had been to reject the Turkish yoke on the Black Sea coast, entailed large expenditures and extremely heavy losses in man power. These expenditures were an additional heavy burden on the disorganized national economy.

### 11. ELIZABETH PETROVNA (1741-1761)

**Movement of Russian Nobles Against German Control.** Anna Ivanovna, who died childless, appointed as heir Ivan VI, the infant son of her niece Anna Leopoldovna, who was married to a German duke (Anton of Brunswick). In 1740, after the death of Anna Ivanovna, the three-months-old infant was declared emperor, with Biren as regent. The rise of Biren to such eminence evoked great discontent even among the court aristocrats who were close to him, and a conspiracy was formed against him. Field Marshal Münnich marched into the palace with a group of guardsmen and arrested Biren.

Anna Leopoldovna, the mother of the infant emperor, was proclaimed regent.

Her rule, however, lasted only about a year. While a struggle for power was in progress among the small faction of Germans who had fallen foul of each other after the death of Anna Ivanovna, a movement in defence of Russian honour and dignity was growing among the officers and soldiers of the guards. The guards favoured Elizabeth Petrovna, a daughter of Peter I. The conspiracy had the support of the French ambassador in St. Petersburg, France being anxious to see an end to German influence in Russia.

On the night of November 25, 1741, Elizabeth unexpectedly came to the palace with her adherents and a company of guards from the Preobrazhensky Regiment. The guardsmen arrested Anna Leopoldovna and her family. The enraged soldiers assaulted the notables, among them Field Marshal Münnich, when arresting them. Elizabeth was proclaimed empress. The guards openly demanded that the new empress rid them of "the German yoke." The infant emperor, Ivan VI, was imprisoned in the Schlüsselburg Fortress, where he was subsequently put to death during the reign of Catherine II.

The Russian nobility won new privileges during the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna. Only nobles were given the right to own lands inhabited by peasants. They received immunity from such a degrading form of punishment as flogging. In St. Petersburg a Nobles' Bank was established in which they could obtain loans at low rates of interest. The landlords were given the right to exile their serfs to Siberia without trial, every such exile being set off as an army recruit. The landlords made extensive use of this power to rid themselves of undesirables as well as of old and sick peasants. Most of the exiles died on the way from disease, exposure and hunger; barely one out of four actually reached the Siberian towns.

Like her predecessors, Elizabeth gave but little attention to state affairs. Life at the palace with its continuous round of masquerades, balls and other entertainments came to resemble an endless fête. The empress spent lavish sums on her wardrobe.

Matters were complicated when Elizabeth Petrovna sent for her nephew, Karl Peter Ulrich (son of Peter I's daughter, Anna Petrovna, who had married the Duke of Holstein). In Russia he was called Peter Fyodorovich and proclaimed heir to the throne. Peter Fyodorovich was an ignorant, frivolous young man who drove his tutors to despair. At eighteen and twenty he was still playing with toy soldiers, which he addressed as though they were human beings. Brought up at a German feudal court, Peter Fyodorovich was a passionate admirer of the Prussian system of Frederick II. He hated Russia and called it "an accursed country." Empress Elizabeth Petrovna married him to the daughter of a petty German prince, Sophia of Anhalt-Zerbst, who was called Catherine Alexeyevna in Russia. Unlike her husband, Catherine was capable and industrious; she read books, diligently studied the Russian language and Russian customs, and endeavoured in every way to win the favour of the Russian nobles.

**The Seven Years' War (1756-1763).** The aggressive policy of King Frederick II of Prussia (1740-1786) began to cause his neighbours serious anxiety. Russia joined an alliance formed against Prussia by France, Austria and Saxony. England sided with Prussia. When Frederick II precipitated war by suddenly attacking Saxony, the Russian troops in 1757 marched into Prussia.

The arrogant Prussian king considered his army "invincible" and looked upon the war with Russia as something in the nature of a military picnic. The very first encounters with the Russians made him change his opinion. He sent a large force under the command of one of his most able generals to meet the Russian army that was advancing on the fortress of Königsberg. In August 1757 the Germans suddenly attacked the Russian regiments near the village of Gross-Jägerndorf while most of the units were moving along a narrow defile in the woods. The Russian vanguard on the fringe of the woods manfully accepted

battle despite the enemy's overwhelming numerical superiority. On their staunchness depended the fate of the whole army, which had to be given time to get out of the woods and deploy for action. The men and officers displayed wonderful heroism. Men with gaping wounds carried on until they lost consciousness. The ranks of the Russians began to dwindle. The Germans were flushed with elation. Victory seemed to be in their grasp.

At this juncture the regiments in the forest rushed into the fray on their own initiative. The supply carts obstructing their path, the men burst through the thickets and took the enemy by surprise.

Giving the Germans no chance to collect themselves, the Russians, with shouts of "Hurrah!" charged the enemy with fixed bayonets. The Germans wavered before the shock of the impact and fled in disorder, abandoning their guns and wounded. The Russian army won a complete victory. Soon after, the big fortress of Koenigsberg surrendered to the Russian troops without offering resistance.

The defeats at the hands of the Russian troops brought Frederick to an impasse. Only the sluggishness of Russia's allies saved him from disaster. France and Austria feared Russia more than they did Prussia. In 1759, after having rallied all his forces, Frederick led them against the Russian army, which was threatening Frankfort-on-Oder. The Russian troops under the veteran General Saltykov took up positions near the village of Kunersdorf. At first the Germans succeeded in bearing down the left flank of the Russians despite their stubborn resistance. Frederick was so confident of victory that without waiting for the battle to end he sent a communiqué to Berlin announcing the complete rout of the Russian army. In the meantime the Russian regiments had regrouped and were warding off one fierce Prussian attack after another with unequalled bravery. Then the Russian cavalry and infantry swooped down upon the enemy, striking a mortal blow. The Germans fled, abandoning their weapons and banners. Frederick himself barely escaped capture.

With almost his entire army lost in the battle at Kunersdorf, the Prussian king gave way to utter despair, and even contemplated suicide. "I am unfortunate to be alive," he wrote. "As I write this, everyone is fleeing and I no longer have any power over these men." Berlin was seized with panic.

Once more disagreement among the allies saved Frederick and gave him a respite and an opportunity to collect a new army. But a year later Russian troops occupied Berlin. In the autumn of 1760 a small Russian force marched up to the German capital. Apart from the armed inhabitants, the garrison of Berlin consisted of 26 battalions of infantry and 46 squadrons of cavalry, with 120 heavy guns. However, the victories of the Russian army had made such a powerful impression that the German generals decided not to defend the city, despite

their numerical superiority, and quietly led their troops out of the city during the night. In the morning the municipal authorities of Berlin tendered the Russian command the key to the fortress gates of the city on a velvet cushion.

Frederick's position was hopeless. He was snatched from destruction by the death in December 1761 of Empress Elizabeth. The new emperor, Peter III, a Prussophile and an admirer of Frederick, immediately signed an armistice with Prussia.

The Seven Years' War covered the battle standards of the Russian regiments with new glory. Foreigners began to say that no other soldier in the world could be compared to the Russian soldier. Even Frederick admitted that it was easier to kill the Russians than force them to retreat.

The well-known Russian general P. A. Rumyantsev (1725-1796) achieved some outstanding victories in this war. During the Seven Years' War Rumyantsev had had occasion to convince himself of the superiority of the Russian school of war initiated by Peter the Great over the Prussian military system of Frederick II. Rumyantsev developed Peter's military art and was the first to employ extended order for securing effective rifle fire and attack in columns for massed bayonet charges.

## 12. RUSSIAN SCIENCE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 18TH CENTURY

The Russian Academy of Sciences conceived by Peter was founded at the end of 1725, after his death. Since there were no Russian scientists Peter had to invite foreigners to Russia to organize higher education and research. Some of the men who came to Russia were outstanding scientists whose names have gone down in the history of science. These include, for example, the mathematicians Bernoulli and Leonhard Euler. But a large number of adventurers who styled themselves scientists also came to Russia. The high state dignitaries appointed to membership of the academy foreigners who could do nothing more than write verses for court festivals.

The first Russian scientist was Mikhail Vasilyevich Lomonosov (1711-1765).

Mikhail Lomonosov was born into the family of a well-to-do fisherman in the northern coastal village of Denisovka (near Kholmogory, not far from Archangel). When the boy was ten years old his father began to take him sea fishing. The dangerous life of a fisherman taught the precocious youngster to observe the phenomena of nature closely. During the long winter nights young Lomonosov diligently studied his letters, grammar and arithmetic. Reading further stimulated his desire to study. He was refused admission to the school in Kholmogory since he was the son of a peasant. Then he set out for Moscow, travel-



M. V. Lomonosov.

*From a portrait of the 18th century*

ling with a transport of fish. By concealing his peasant origin he was able to gain admission to the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy. For five years Mikhail Lomonosov lived from hand to mouth on three kopeks a day. The noblemen's sons who studied at the academy made fun of Lomonosov, a twenty-year-old giant, but despite his poverty and their mockery he made rapid progress. After five years at the Slavonic-Greek-Latin Academy, Lomonosov received an opportunity to enter the Academy of Sciences, since the gymnasium attached to it could not supply enough noble-born students to fill the quota. There also Lomonosov's ability and diligence attracted the atten-

tion of the professors. As one of the three best students he was sent abroad to complete his education. During the four years Lomonosov spent abroad he delved into the works of the leading scientists of Europe, studying chemistry, metallurgy, mining and mathematics. After his return to Russia in 1745 he was made a professor, and was the first Russian scientist to become a member of the academy.

Lomonosov made numerous important discoveries in various fields of science. For versatility he has no equal in the history of Russian science. Many of his ideas and discoveries won recognition only in the 19th century, when they were brilliantly confirmed by the investigations of Western European and Russian scientists of later generations.

In the field of physics Lomonosov is the author of a theory of the structure of matter which enabled him to give a true explanation of many physical phenomena. He was the first to formulate the mechanical theory of heat, which in the 17th century had been ascribed to a subtle imponderable fluid called "caloric." Lomonosov was the first to arrive at a conception of the chemical elements and gave a scientific substantiation for the law of the conservation of mass during chemical changes. Forty years later this law was rediscovered by the French chemist Lavoisier, to whom it is credited. In the field of geology Lomo-

nosov made a study of the origin of minerals and ores which was of great practical significance for geological prospecting. He was the first to demonstrate the vegetable origin of coal. His works laid the foundation for research in physics, chemistry, astronomy, geology and geography in Russia. He was the first man in Europe to deliver a course of lectures on physical chemistry. He devoted much time to astronomy and navigation, and worked out a method for accurately determining a ship's coordinates. He was almost sixty years ahead of Young in establishing the type of undulatory vibrations of the earth's surface. He was thirty years ahead of Herschel in discovering the presence of an atmosphere on Venus. He was 135 years ahead of Nansen in indicating the direction of the drift in the Arctic Ocean.

Lomonosov always strove to apply scientific information and discoveries for the benefit of his country. For instance, after more than 3,000 experiments he worked out a method of making coloured glass. This enabled him and his pupils to make several mosaic paintings, including a huge one of the Battle of Poltava (see drawing on p. 29), Lomonosov drew up a remarkable plan for an expedition which was to open a route from Europe to Asia through the Arctic Ocean. In one of his poems Lomonosov expressed his confidence that Russian seamen would solve this problem:

*Grim Nature does in vain assay  
To conceal from us the way  
'Twixt our shores and East.  
Into the future I gaze  
And Russia's Columbus I see  
Amidst the ice, scoring destiny.*

Lomonosov played a great role in the formation of the Russian literary language. He eliminated distortions, obsolete ecclesiastical expressions and unnecessary foreign words, making it conform more closely to the language of the people. In his poetry he was the first to utilize the musical qualities of the Russian language. He was the author of a scientific Russian grammar; several generations used his textbook. Even this brief list of Lomonosov's main works shows how extensive and varied was the activity of this Russian scientist. Of him the famous Russian poet Alexander Pushkin wrote:

"Combining extraordinary strength of will with extraordinary strength of reason Lomonosov embraced all the branches of education. The thirst for knowledge was an overpowering passion of a soul filled with passions. Historian, rhetorician, mechanic, chemist, mineralogist, artist and poet—he experienced everything and fathomed all."

Lomonosov contributed greatly to the spread of science and the education of young scientists, writers and artists.

The Moscow University was founded in 1755 on Lomonosov's initiative. During the second half of the 18th century the university produced a number of outstanding scientists and writers.

### 13. THE COLONIAL POLICY OF RUSSIAN TSARISM UNDER PETER I'S SUCCESSORS

**The Discovery of Kamchatka.** The Russians continued to develop the Arctic, Siberia, the Amur region, and the coast and islands of the Pacific. The tsarist government tried to make good its acute deficit, brought on by the heavy war expenditures, the impoverishment of the population and the exhaustion of the country, by new colonial conquests.

In 1697 and 1698 Vladimir Atlasov, an officer of the Streltsi, setting out from the Anadyr outpost (on the Anadyr River) at the head of a small detachment on deer sleds, reached the coast of Kamchatka and imposed tribute, primarily in furs, on the Kamchadales (Itelmens). This Russian explorer was the first to discover and describe the Kamchatka Peninsula.

The Kamchadales lived in clan communities, each clan comprising several hundred tent-homes. Fishing was the main occupation. The clans were embroiled in constant feuds. The Kamchadales' weapons were bows with flint and bone-tipped arrows. After Atlasov's expedition the first Russian outposts were set up on Kamchatka, which were used by Cossacks and soldiers as a base for freebooting expeditions or quests for tribute. The Kamchadales often attacked the collectors of tribute and sometimes came right up to the outposts, but were not able to capture them.

A big Kamchadale uprising, involving a large number of clans, flared up in 1731 and 1732. It was led by Kamchadales who had lived among the Russians and had learned the use of firearms. After the uprising had been quelled the Russians became firmly entrenched in Kamchatka. At the same time the large clan communities of the Kamchadales began to disintegrate.

Less successful was the struggle of the tsarist government against the Koryaks (Nymylans). The Koryaks roamed with their deer herds in the tundra between the seacoast and the Kolyma River. At the approach of military detachments they would break camp and move on. The absence of roads and the scarcity of game rendered pursuit difficult. With their superior knowledge of locality the Koryaks would make sudden raids on groups of Russian Cossacks and soldiers and wipe them out. The Chukches (Luoravetlans), who inhabited the

northeastern extremity of Asia, waged a similar struggle against the tsarist government.

**Bering's Expedition.** In the middle of the 17th century an expedition led by Simon Dezhnyov rounded the Chukotsk Peninsula and proved the existence of a strait lying between Asia and America. By the beginning of the 18th century, however, this discovery had been forgotten. Shortly before his death Peter I wrote out instructions for a Kamchatka expedition which was to re-explore the northeastern coast of Asia and determine whether it was connected with America. Vitus Bering, a Dane serving in the Russian navy, was put in charge of the expedition. During the first expedition (1728-30) Bering reached the strait which bears his name, but he did not risk sailing on to the coast of America. Two years after Bering's return a Russian seaman named Fyodorov and a geodesist named Gvozdev not only reached the American coast in a small boat but drew the first map of the opposite-lying coasts of Asia and America. This was a brilliant achievement of Russian geographical science.

A second expedition was fitted out at the beginning of the forties of the 18th century. After sailing for a month and a half Bering and his companions sighted the snow-capped ranges of Alaska. The first description of Alaska was also made by Russians.

On the return voyage the Bering expedition ran into great difficulties. The shortage of drinking water and food led to an outbreak of scurvy, which carried off one or two sailors every day. The expedition stopped to winter on one of the Komandorski Islands, which was named after Bering. It was on this island that Bering died and was buried. The following summer the surviving sailors built a new boat, in which they reached the coast of Kamchatka.

The expeditions of Russian navigators to the shore of America were of great scientific importance. They conclusively established the configuration of the northern coasts of Asia and America and at the same time collected abundant data on the inhabitants and flora and fauna of the regions.

The expeditions of scientists and explorers were followed by expeditions of big traders to the Kurile and Aleutian islands as well as to the American continent. From these areas traders and merchants shipped out a tremendous quantity of seal, beaver, silver fox, blue polar fox and other furs. The Russian-American Company was established at the end of the 18th century to protect big commercial interests and to fight English competition. This company received rights to exploit Alaska, which became a Russian colony in 1797 and remained one until 1867.

**The Oppression of Bashkiria.** After the suppression of the Aldar-Kusyum uprising of 1705-1711 the tsarist government continued to seize Bashkirian lands. The Bashkirs willingly gave refuge to Russian



fugitive peasants and refused to hand them over to the tsarist government. With the idea of combating the Bashkirs and cutting them off from the rest of the Volga peoples the government began to build a new line of fortifications. First it built a chain of forts beyond the Kama River, called the Trans-Kama Line, which prevented the Bashkirs from crossing to the right bank of the Kama and to the left bank of the Middle Volga. Then the government began to fortify the line along the Yaik River (the Ural). The Bashkirs were forced to perform the hardest earth and timber work on the construction of the forts. The intensive exploitation of the Bashkirs by the tsarist government led to fresh popular uprisings in Bashkiria.

In the summer of 1735 insurgent Bashkirs tried to hinder the construction of Orenburg and other forts. Two years later another revolt broke out, headed by feudal lords who aimed at creating an independent Bashkir state. A few years later leadership of the Bashkirs was assumed by a gifted soldier named Karasakal (Blackbeard) who claimed to be a descendant of Kuchum, the Siberian khan. He was well acquainted with Central Asia and could speak all the local dialects. Karasakal was distinguished for his fearlessness. His memory lives to the present day in folk songs, which call him swift "as the wind," and say that "the world has seen few men of his giant stature." Only in June 1740 did the tsarist troops succeed in routing the main forces of the insurgents near the Tobol River. Karasakal managed to escape to Kazakh territory.

After the suppression of this uprising oppression of the Bashkir population became still stronger. The Bashkirs were prohibited from using the forests which had been turned over to the factories. The tsarist government established a monopoly on salt, compelling the Bashkirs to pay a high price for it. The Orthodox church forcibly converted the Moslem Bashkirs to Christianity. Those who refused to accept Christianity were persecuted and moved to new areas. The church was used as a weapon to enslave and oppress the Bashkir people.

The year 1755 saw a Bashkir uprising, chiefly of a religious character, led by a mullah named Batyrsha. He circulated appeals throughout the countryside describing the persecution of the Bashkir population and calling upon the people to rise in defence of Islam. He urged them to cease their struggle against the Kazakhs and to act jointly for their common emancipation. Actually the religious nature of the movement cloaked a struggle of the Bashkir people for independence. The uprising assumed the form of guerilla warfare which went on for nearly two years. Batyrsha was arrested and brought in chains to St. Petersburg, where he spent several years in a dungeon of the Schlüsselburg Fortress. He perished in an attempt to escape after he had cut down several of the prison guards.

After the suppression of the uprising headed by Batyrsha over 50,000 Bashkirs fled to the Kazakh steppes to escape persecution. Instigated by the tsarist government, the Kazakhs attacked the Bashkirs. They killed some of the men and turned the rest over to the tsarist authorities. This is an example of how the tsarist government incited one people against another in order to strengthen its hold over them.

#### 14. CENTRAL ASIA IN THE 18TH CENTURY

With the increase in the power of the Uzbek feudal lords, who acquired vast domains, the Bokhara and Khiva khanates fell into utter political decline. The feudal lords waged interminable wars among themselves, ravaging each other's estates and massacring or leading the people off into captivity. Even such large cities as Samarkand, Bokhara and others became almost depopulated. The crafts and trade were in a state of total decline, the fields were overrun by weeds and the surviving population starved and scattered in all directions.

In 1740 Shah Nadir of Persia subjugated the Central Asian khanate. The devastated country was in no condition to offer resistance. The shah led off to Persia a large number of young men whom he compelled to serve in his army.

After the departure of the Persian troops the feudal lords of Khiva renewed their struggle with redoubled energy. Nomad Turkmen tribes took advantage of the anarchy to raid the settled areas and plunder the population. The struggle for the restoration of the Khiva khanate was begun by Mohammed-Emmin, an Uzbek nobleman, who succeeded in driving off the Turkmen tribes and crushing the opposition of separate feudal lords. Peace was restored to the country and the people began to return to their former homes. The immediate descendants of Mohammed-Emmin founded a new Khiva dynasty.

The Bokhara khanate was restored by Mohammed-Rakhim, who was also of Uzbek noble origin. Taken prisoner during the campaign of the Persian shah, he served in his army and was sent by him to Bokhara as chief satrap. Mohammed-Rakhim ruthlessly crushed all opposition on the part of the feudal lords. In 1756 he became so powerful that he assumed the title of khan and founded a new dynasty of Bokhara khans.

In the second half of the 18th century the Ferghana Valley became the centre of an independent Kokand khanate.

The consolidation in Central Asia of the Uzbek states, which defended their national independence against Persia and suppressed the local feudal lords, played an important role in the restoration of the economic life of these countries. The towns again grew populous and became centres of the crafts and trade. The increase in trade with Russia played an important part in the development of the towns.

**The Kazakhs.** At the end of the 17th century the Kazakhs were divided into three *zhuza*, or states: the Great Horde, occupying the Lake Balkhash area; the Medium Horde, in the steppes north of the middle reaches of the Syr Darya, and the Small Horde, north of the Aral Sea.

The Kazakh ruling caste, consisting of khans and sultans who traced their ancestry to Genghis Khan, regarded themselves as "blue-bloods." The power of the khans was hereditary. The various tribes were ruled by sultans who were vassals of the khans. Both khans and sultans extracted tribute from the population, impositions being made on pasturage, trading caravans, on husbandmen (along the Syr Darya) and on city dwellers.

In some of the tribes the hereditary clan elders became rulers, independent of the khans and the sultans. They owned tremendous herds of cattle and cruelly exploited the population, which still lived under the patriarchal clan-community system. While the land belonged to the community the cattle had long since become private property. The elders of many communities were directly subordinate to the sultans and the khans.

The Kazakh people had to wage a constant struggle against foreign enemies who strove to deprive them of their independence. Brave warriors known as *batyri* often led the struggle against the invaders.

In the twenties of the 18th century for example, the Kazakhs were attacked in the east by the Jungars (Kalmucks). This period has been immortalized in Kazakh folklore as the time of the "Great Disaster." The Great Horde was conquered and lost its political independence. The towns on the Syr Darya were made subject to the Jungars. The Medium Horde migrated to the Tobol River. The Small Horde migrated to the Yaik River, closer to the Russian border, where the Kazakhs came into conflict with the Volga Kalmucks.

In 1731 the Kazakh khan of the Small Horde, Abulkhaiyr, took Russian citizenship in the hope of obtaining aid from the Russians against the Kalmucks.

In 1758 the Kazakh people under the leadership of the famous warrior Khan Ablai of the Medium Horde utterly routed the Jungars with the help of Chinese troops and thereby threw off the Jungar yoke.

The grievous condition of the Kazakh masses, oppressed both by their own feudal lords and the Russian government, led to a big uprising (1783-1797) in the Small Horde. The uprising was headed by a *batyr* named Srym.

The tsarist detachments could not cope with the movement, which had assumed a sweeping character and was at the same time directed against the sultans and the rich elders. Thereupon the sultans of the Small Horde united and secured aid from the sultans of the Medium

Horde. Many rich elders went over to the side of the new khan appointed by the tsarist government.

Srym and his followers killed the khan, who was hated by the people, and moving deeper into the steppes continued the struggle against the tsarist forces. Pursued by Kazakh feudal lords and Russian detachments, Srym fled to Khiva, where he perished in 1802.

On the Upper Yaik the Kazakhs came into conflict with the Bashkirs. The tsarist government adroitly played off the Bashkirs, Kazakhs and Kalmucks against each other in order to strengthen its own influence beyond the Volga. Tsarism regarded the Bashkirs as the most dangerous of these peoples.

### *Chapter III*

## THE NOBLESSE EMPIRE OF CATHERINE II (1762-1796),

### 15. BEGINNING OF THE REIGN OF CATHERINE II

**The Coup d'État of 1762.** After Elizabeth's death her nephew Peter Fyodorovich, the former Duke of Holstein, became the Russian emperor as Peter III (1761-1762). He proclaimed himself an adherent of the king of Prussia and immediately suspended the operations of the Russian army against Frederick II. Peter III surrounded himself with generals and officers from Holstein and energetically set about introducing the Prussian system into the Russian army, which justifiably regarded itself as the victor over Frederick's army. After concluding peace with Frederick, Peter began to prepare for a war against Denmark in the interests of the Holstein dynasty, interests which were alien to the Russian state. The fact that he was emperor of Russia did not prevent Peter from espousing the cause of Prussia and Holstein.

Despite his contempt for the Russian nobles, Peter was obliged to pass a law on "liberties for the nobility" (1762), a law which had great importance for the landlords. It abolished the obligatory service of nobles in the army and civil institutions. Many of the nobles immediately retired and busied themselves with their estates. However, even this important concession to the nobles only temporarily checked the outburst against Peter's policy. A conspiracy was formed among the officers of the guards in favour of his consort, Catherine Alexeyevna, who had always been ambitious of becoming empress of Russia.

The Orlov brothers, officers of the guards, headed the conspirators and maintained secret contact with Catherine. Early in the morning of June 28, 1762, they brought Catherine to St. Petersburg from a suburban palace and proclaimed her empress. The guards regiments willingly swore allegiance to her. The following day, after an unsuccessful attempt to flee to Kronstadt, Peter formally abdicated the throne. He was murdered shortly afterwards. Catherine Alexeyevna became Empress Catherine II.

**Catherine II.** At the time Catherine II ascended the throne, Russia's administrative system and economy was in a state of utter disorganization and decline. There was no money in the treasury. The army had not received its pay for more than seven months. The ships were in disrepair and the fortresses were crumbling. Everywhere the people complained of oppression, bribery and extortions by the tsarist judges and officials. Unrest was rife among the masses, affecting about 49,000 peasants attached to factories and 150,000 serfs on landlords' estates. The jails were filled with prisoners and convicts.

Catherine realized the danger that threatened the feudal empire of the nobility. She understood that to consolidate the state, the administrative system had to be put in order, the army strengthened and the economy restored. She considered that only a strong government would be able to check the spread of peasant uprisings. While giving the landlords still more power over their peasants, Catherine in the early years of her reign nevertheless attempted to alleviate the burden of serfdom for fear of new peasant uprisings.

At the beginning of her reign Catherine studied the works of the enlightened philosophers, with some of whom she kept up a correspondence. Representatives of French philosophic school, such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot and others, attacked the feudal system and ridiculed medieval prejudices. They proclaimed the triumph of reason, which was to point the way to the reconstruction of the social system on the basis of equality of men before law. The philosophers placed their hopes for such a reformation on the activity of enlightened monarchs. They proclaimed the "union of philosophers and monarchs." This system was called "enlightened absolutism," i.e., a system under which the monarch was to do everything for the people, without, however, admitting them to the government of the state. The ideas of enlightened philosophy were widespread in the countries where old feudal institutions were preventing the rise of the bourgeois social system, though conditions were ripe for it. However, it was inevitable that progressive bourgeois thinkers should lose faith in the possibility of reshaping the social system with the help of monarchs. In Russia, where the feudal-serf system reigned supreme, these enlightened ideas influenced only a small group of advanced intellectuals among the nobility.

Catherine wanted to utilize the ideas of the philosophers and their criticism of feudalism not in order to destroy this system but to strengthen the absolutist-feudal state by introducing certain improvements in administration.

Through her correspondence with Voltaire, Diderot and others, Catherine wished to create the impression in Europe that she was a wise and enlightened monarch. She deceived these writers. Poverty, hunger and ignorance reigned in the Russian serf village, yet Catherine informed Voltaire that there was not a peasant in Russia who did not eat chicken when he felt like it, and that lately (this was a hint at her own reign) the peasants had been showing a preference for turkey. Catherine was extremely hypocritical. While assuring the philosophers that she was prepared to make their doctrines her political precept, she at the same time ridiculed these doctrines. Catherine loved flattery and adoration. She surrounded herself with adulators and strove to have herself glorified in European literature.

Unlike her immediate predecessors, Catherine personally took part in the decision of all important questions of policy. She drafted laws and edicts, was interested in literature, and even published a magazine (*A Bit of Everything*).

During her reign the nobility received additional important privileges. "The Age of Catherine" was the golden age in the history of the noblesse empire.

A few days after her accession Catherine issued a special ukase demanding absolute obedience on the part of the peasants to the landlords. To bring order into the government system she decided to convene a commission which was to draw up a new code of laws, she herself writing the Instructions for the guidance of the commission in which she drew extensively upon the works of Montesquieu and several other writers of Western Europe. In the Instructions she strove to prove the necessity of an autocracy for Russia.

The commission for drafting new laws began its sessions in the summer of 1767 in Moscow. The majority of the deputies were nobles and wealthy townspeople. The serf peasants had not taken part in the election of the commission and were not represented on it. The deputies appeared with instructions from their electors in which the latter voiced their needs and desires. The nobles asked not only that their rights and privileges be preserved but that they be extended.

Most of the meetings of the commission were devoted to a reading of the Instructions from the empress and a discussion of those submitted by the deputies. No practical results followed from Catherine's Instructions or from the commission she initiated for the drafting of new laws. At the end of 1768 the commission ceased functioning.

## 16. FOREIGN POLICY OF CATHERINE II PRIOR TO THE PEASANT WAR

**The First Partition of Poland (Rzecz Pospolita).** The successes of the Russian army in the Seven Years' War made a tremendous impression in Western Europe both on Russia's allies in this war, Austria and France, and on her opponent, Prussia. Despite Russia's unexpected withdrawal from the war, her role in international affairs grew considerably. Austria and France regarded her growing power and influence with displeasure and alarm. France particularly feared Russian influence in the East. French merchants and statesmen hoped to monopolize trade with the East. Consequently France strove to surround Russia with a ring of hostile states, and to unite Turkey, Poland, Sweden and Austria against her. The leaders of Russian foreign policy tried to counter the Franco-Austrian alliance by an alliance of northern countries — Russia, Prussia, England, and others. But their attempts failed owing to irreconcilable antagonisms among these states.

Austria wished to conquer the fertile lands of Western Ukraine. Prussia wanted to annex Polish territory on the Lower Vistula. Russia strove to recover Byelorussian and Ukrainian lands which had been seized by Poland. Finally, every one of these countries—Russia, Austria and Prussia—feared each other's increase.

Poland was in a state of utter decline. The central government had little power. The king's authority was limited by the Diet. A single vote cast against a proposal in the Diet was sufficient to reject it. This was called *liberum veto*, a practice which led to great abuses, for the deputies to the Diet openly traded their votes. Even a unanimous decision of the Diet was not always certain to be enforced, since the dissatisfied gentry formed armed confederations which could be made to yield only by force of arms.

The Polish state system benefited the big magnates for it enabled them to direct foreign and home policy in their own interests and to rule their vast possessions with a free hand. The lot of the Polish peasants was particularly hard. Even worse was the position of the other nationalities, especially the Ukrainians and the Byelorussians. The Orthodox population and the Protestants were subjected to all manner of persecutions.

After the death of King Augustus III of Poland (in 1763) the Russian government succeeded in having Count Stanislaus Poniatowski, Catherine's candidate, elected king. Russia and Prussia jointly demanded that the Diet give equal rights to the Orthodox Believers, the Protestants and the Catholics. When the Diet refused to accede to this demand, the Russian ambassador to Poland, Prince Repnin, organized three confederations of representatives of the Protestants, Orthodox

Believers and of Catholics who were dissatisfied with the king. The confederates received large financial assistance from the Russian government, and Russian troops were sent into Polish territory. Voices continued to be raised in the Diet against any concessions, but Repnin arrested several senators in Warsaw itself and sent them to Russia under a strong guard. The Diet was compelled to agree to equalize the rights of the non-Catholic and the Catholic gentry. In 1768 a special agreement was concluded between Poland and Russia under which no changes were to be made in the Polish state system in the future. Russia undertook to guarantee its inviolability.

A section of the gentry that was dissatisfied with the concessions made to the Russian government formed an armed confederation in the town of Bar. The confederates obtained the support of France, who was interested in checking Russian influence, and began to make raids on the Ukrainian population. This led to a Cossack and peasant uprising in the Ukraine against Polish rule. The tsarist government helped the Polish authorities to suppress the uprising, since it was afraid of the peasant movement spreading to Russia.

Russia's growing influence in Poland exceedingly alarmed both Austria and Prussia. Frederick II, fearing that Russia would annex Poland, drew up a plan for the partition of Polish territory among Austria, Prussia and Russia. Under an agreement concluded by these governments, Prussia took over the Polish possessions on the Baltic seacoast and part of Great Poland. The eastern part of Prussia was thus united with the western part (Brandenburg) in one whole. Prussia's claims to Danzig and Thorn, however, were rejected by Catherine. Austria seized Ukrainian Galicia, and Russia took over part of Byelorussia. This was the first partition of Poland, carried out in 1773.

**The First War With Turkey (1768-1774).** The events in Poland accelerated the outbreak of war between Russia and Turkey. The French ambassador persuaded the Turkish government that the increase of Russian influence in Poland was to the disadvantage of Turkey and constituted a danger to her. Moreover, the events in Poland had tied down part of the Russian army. The Turks thought this an opportune moment to check Russian advance to the Black Sea. In 1768 the sultan demanded of the Russian ambassador in Constantinople that Russia withdraw her troops from Poland. Upon receiving a refusal he ordered the Russian embassy arrested and imprisoned.

Europe was certain that Russia would not be equal to a double war with Turkey and Poland and would be defeated. Hostilities were opened by the Crimean khan. In the spring of 1769 Tatar hordes invaded and ravaged the south Russian borderlands. This was the last large incursion of the Crimean Tatars into Russian or Ukrainian territory.

General Rumyantsev, an outstanding military leader, well known for his victories over the Germans in the Seven Years' War, was placed



at the head of the Russian army. His method of warfare was distinguished for daring and novel tactics. Rumyantsev himself sought out the enemy. Above all he tried to destroy the enemy's man power. He chose his commanders ably. Among them was Alexander Vasilyevich Suvorov, whose military genius brought him rapid advancement.

In 1770 Rumyantsev learned that a Turkish army of 80,000 stood encamped not far from the Larga River. Rumyantsev had only about 30,000 men at his disposal. "Our glory and dignity do not allow us to suffer the presence of the enemy," he said. The Russian army secretly crossed the river and dealt the enemy a swift flanking blow. The battle ended in complete victory for the Russian army.

Two weeks later Rumyantsev with about 80,000 Tatars in his rear was confronted by the main forces of the Turks, 150,000 strong, commanded by the vizier. The commander-in-chief of the Turkish army was certain that the Russian army had fallen into a trap. Despite the enemy's overwhelming superiority Rumyantsev decided to open the attack first. "To beat big forces with small ones," he said, "is an art and glory, but to be defeated by a superior foe requires no skill." Rumyantsev did not wait to be attacked but launched an offensive against the vizier, who had camped on the banks of the Kagul River (a tributary of the Danube). The Turkish artillery opened withering fire on the attacking forces, and large masses of cavalry rushed between the columns in an attempt to scatter them. It was a critical moment. Some of the units began to waver. Just then Rumyantsev appeared. "Stick it, lads!" he cried to his men, and inspiring them by his own example led them forward. The picked Turkish troops fell back before the Russian bayonet charge and fled from the battlefield. This victory cleared the Turks from the entire territory between the Dniester and the Danube. Military operations shifted to the right bank of the Danube.

For his victories won during the First Turkish War Rumyantsev, among other awards, received the rank and title of General Field Marshal and the honorific epithet of *Zadunaisky* (of the Danube) for his passage of the Danube.

Rumyantsev set forth his ideas on warfare in his "Rites of Military Service" which were later adopted with slight modification as the official regulations for the army. These instructions are permeated throughout by the idea of offensive strategy and tactics. Rumyantsev demanded consideration for the men and the cultivation in officers and men of a sense of military duty and resourcefulness. One of Rumyantsev's pupils was the great Russian general Suvorov.

Major successes were attained at sea as well. The Russian fleet, which up to the outbreak of war had been stationed in the Baltic Sea, rounded Europe and sailed up to the Greek coast in the Mediterranean. In June 1770 a Russian squadron under Admiral Sviridov attacked the Turkish fleet near the Bay of Chesme (in Asia Minor, opposite

the Island of Chios). The Turks had more than twice as many ships and guns as the Russians. The Russian fleet had its orders to destroy the enemy or perish in the attempt. After several hours of furious battle the Turkish fleet raised sail and hurried to take refuge in the Bay of Chesme. On the following day the entire Turkish fleet was destroyed.

In 1771 another Russian army conquered all the Crimea in a short space of time. The Russian army crossed the Danube repeatedly in the following years. Alexander Suvorov won renown in these campaigns.

Peace was concluded in 1774 in the village of Kuchuk Kainarji. Catherine II hastened to conclude peace because of a formidable uprising of peasants under the leadership of Pugachev that had flared up in the country. Under the peace terms Russia received the lands between the Dnieper and the Bug as well as Kerch in the Crimea, which furnished an outlet to the Black Sea through the Kerch Strait. Russian ships now enjoyed the same freedom of the Black Sea as the English and the French. Turkey also had to open the straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus to Russian ships. The Crimean khanate was proclaimed independent of Turkey, and Russian influence in the Crimea increased.

## 17. SERF ECONOMY IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY

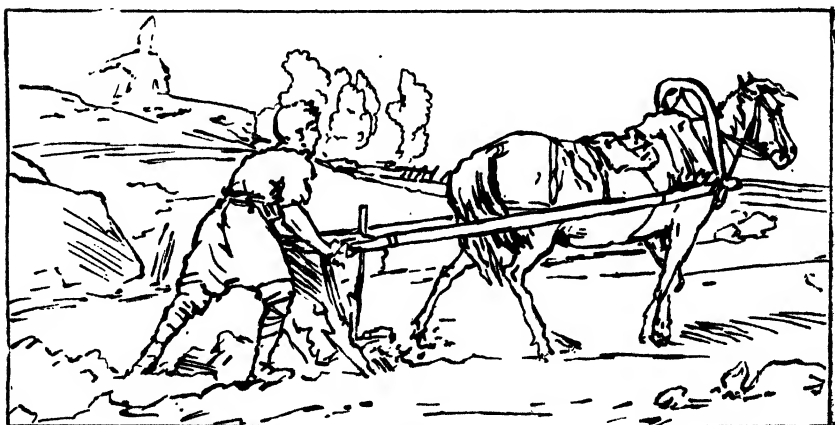
**The Condition of the Peasants.** In the second half of the 18th century Russia's economy continued to be based on serfdom. Catherine made extensive grants of land, together with the peasants living on them, as presents and rewards to nobles. For example, the Orlov brothers, who had taken part in the palace coup of 1762, received an award of over 50,000 peasants; Field Marshal Potemkin was given more than 40,000. Altogether Catherine awarded her nobles 800,000 peasants. During her reign privately-owned serfs constituted slightly more than half of the entire peasant population. Of the remaining number the largest group were the "state" peasants. As in the 17th century, the peasants whose taxes went to maintain the court of the tsar were called "court" peasants. Under Paul I, Catherine's son, peasants privately owned by the royal family began to be called appanage peasants. In 1764 Catherine dispossessed the monasteries of their demesnes and placed the peasants living on them under a special body, the College of Economy. These peasants were known as "economic."

With the development of commodity circulation market relations became more stable and diversified. In the 18th century Russian exports of agricultural produce to Western Europe rapidly increased. The main items were flax and hemp, which constituted about one-third of the total value of the exports. Russian hemp was in great

demand for European sailing ships. Corn exports increased noticeably at the end of the century, when Russia had completely gained possession of the coast of the Black Sea. The demand for corn increased rapidly on the home market as well, owing to the growth of the non-agricultural urban population: in 1724 the urban population of Russia was 328,000; in 1782 it was 802,000, and in 1796 it reached 1,301,000. The landlords, in need of ready money, marketed hemp, flax, fats, corn and other produce. They strove to extract maximum profits from their serf economy.

The productivity of serf labour on the barren lands of the northern forest zone was so low that the landlords found it more profitable to accept *obrok* (quit-rent) from the peasant than to compel him to till their land. On the other hand, in the southern black earth regions the *barshchina* (corvée) became the main form of service rendered by the peasants. Thus there arose the division of the serfs into a category which paid *obrok* and another which rendered *barshchina* services. During Catherine's reign *obroks* were more than doubled on the average. To raise money for *obrok* payments peasants left their villages to find employment as carpenters, blacksmiths, factory workers, cab drivers in the towns, vendors, etc. The peasants who rendered *barshchina* had an even harder time. They had to work on the landlord's estate three days out of the week. Many landlords demanded even more days of work, and some left the peasants only the holidays on which to cultivate their own land.

Work hours were not fixed by law, and were left entirely to the discretion of the landlord. Usually the peasant started work before



Tillage. From a drawing by Atkinson,  
18th century



*Barshchina (forced serf labour). From "A Mirror of the Village."  
18th century*

sunrise and finished only at dusk. To compel obedience the landlord had to possess great power over the peasants. An ukase issued by Catherine in 1765 gave a landlord the right to exile his peasants to penal servitude for being "insolent." Two years later the peasants were prohibited from lodging any complaints against their landlords.

In the second half of the 18th century the purchase and sale of peasants became very common. Landlords often sold their peasants apart from the land, "for shipment." Villages and families were sold wholesale, and frequently peasants were separated from their families, and children sold separately from their parents. The price of a peasant varied according to his sex, age, physique, and calling. Landlords were known to have sold girls at 10 rubles apiece. At the same time they paid hundreds and even thousands of rubles for pedigree borzoi puppies. Advertisements for the sale of serfs were openly printed in the official newspapers side by side with announcements of the sale of cattle, dogs and miscellaneous chattels.

The landlords' power over the lives and property of the peasants led to monstrous crimes. The case of a woman landholder named Saltykova is an example of the savage tyranny that was rife among

the landed proprietors. Over a period of 10 years Saltykova (whom the people called derisively *Saltychikha*) tortured to death about 140 persons, mostly women and girls, on trifling pretexts. She invented the most refined tortures for her victims: she tore off their ears with red-hot pincers, compelled them to stand barefooted in the freezing cold, etc. Saltykova was brought to trial only five years after complaints had been lodged against her. Since she enjoyed immunity from corporal punishment as a member of the nobility, other people were tortured in her presence during the trial in order to instill fear in her. The court condemned Saltykova to hard labour, but Catherine commuted the sentence to confinement in a cloister.

**The Growth of Manufacturing.** As in the 17th century, most of the goods which appeared on the market were supplied by the peasants and the petty urban craftsmen, since manufactory production, despite its considerable development, could not satisfy the demands of the market. The number of manufactories increased approximately threefold during Catherine's reign. Serf labour was widely employed in the manufactories, and serf factories remained the prevailing type up to the second half of the 18th century. Due to the shortage of free labour, the nobles who owned estates and peasants found themselves in a better position than the merchants, for they could put their serfs to work in the manufactories, obtaining the necessary raw materials such as iron ore, wool, flax, hemp, etc., from their farms and mines. These conditions stimulated the development of manufactories on the estates of the nobles, which competed effectively with those of the merchants. Some of the better off serf peasants grew rich by trading and money-lending and established manufactories of their own, employing the labour of freemen and of peasants who tried to earn their *obrok*.

The labour of the manufactory workers was very hard and differed little from that of serfs on the land. The work premises were usually dark, damp and dirty. The workday lasted as a rule 14 and sometimes 16 hours. The wages were miserably low, and not paid regularly. The workers went hungry and were frequently ill. The lot of the "possessional" peasants in the metallurgical factories was particularly hard. They had to work in factories located scores and even hundreds of miles away from their villages.

**Outbreaks Among the Peasants and Manufactory Workers.** Ruthless exploitation at the manufactories resulted in a mass movement of strikes and open uprisings of the working people in the middle of the 18th century. The largest uprisings were those among the peasants attached to the factories of the merchants Goncharov and Demidov in 1752. The factory peasants of the Goncharov sail-making establishment near the town of Maloyaroslavets defeated the military detachment sent to suppress the rising and even seized

three of its guns. The same year an entire district attached to the Demidov iron foundries rebelled. A local retired soldier taught the peasants how to handle arms. The peasants routed a detachment of 500 soldiers sent out against them.

The uprisings at the Goncharov and Demidov factories were crushed only after a large detachment of tsarist troops consisting of three regiments of infantry and artillery was sent out against them. Isolated uprisings likewise broke out in the metallurgical works of the Urals in the 'sixties.

Disorders among the serf peasants showed a marked increase beginning with the 'forties. Peasants killed their landlords and bailiffs, set fire to estates, and sometimes rose in whole villages against the government detachments. The movement grew particularly strong after 1762, when the landlords, upon returning to their estates following the edict of "liberties of the nobility," began to oppress the peasants still more.

## 18. THE PEASANT WAR LED BY PUGACHEV

**The Beginning of the Uprisings.** In the sixties of the 18th century outbreaks among the serfs became more frequent. There were close upon 40 uprisings in the central regions of Russia alone.

The Volga peoples who were most outrageously exploited by both the landlords and the tsarist officials, found themselves in a particularly grievous position. After the suppression of the Batyrsha uprising in Bashkiria, the seizure of Bashkirian lands was intensified. Russian merchants and manufacturers laid waste to the Bashkirian farms, cut down forests and built new factories. Fearing raids, they turned the factories into regular fortresses and supplied them with arms and gunpowder.

The Kalmucks, who until the seventies of the 18th century lived on either side of the Lower Volga, were in no better a position. In 1771, unable to bear the persecutions of the tsarist government any longer, a considerable section of the Kalmucks who had pitched their nomad camps on the left banks of the Volga migrated eastward towards the Chinese border. The majority of the Kalmucks died on the way from hunger and in battle with the Kazakhs. The survivors settled in Chinese Eastern Turkestan. The only Kalmucks remaining in Russia were those who lived on the right bank of the Volga.

The unrest also spread among the Russian Cossacks living on the Yaik (Ural) River. By the middle of the 18th century the same social differentiation had taken place among the Yaik Cossacks as among the Zaporozhye and Don Cossacks before them. There were constant conflicts between the wealthy Cossacks and the mass of the rank-and-file. As a rule the government took the side of the wealthy Cossacks

and their atamans and regarded all opposition to them as "mutiny." During an uprising in the town of Yaitsk in 1772 the Cossacks killed General Traubenberg, and several Cossack atamans. Government troops sent out against the Yaik Cossacks quelled the uprising and occupied Yaitsk. Cossack self-government was abolished and a commandant at the head of a military detachment was put in charge of the town. Many of the Cossacks who had taken part in the uprising managed to escape persecution.

Attempts to send the Cossacks to the war against Turkey provoked outbreaks also among the Don Cossacks. At that time a rumour spread among the Don and Yaik Cossacks that Peter III was alive and hiding in their midst. Impostors claiming to be the tsar appeared on the scene. The people had but a vague idea of the life of Peter III. His violent death was ascribed to the revenge of the nobles for his alleged desire to ease the lot of the peasants.

**Emelyan Pugachev.** In the autumn of 1773 Emelyan Pugachev assumed leadership of the Cossack uprising. Pugachev was born and

raised in the Don Cossack village of Zimoveisk, which also happened to be the birthplace of Stepan Razin. He had participated in the Seven Years' War, had been in Poland and seen active service during the war with Turkey. Sent home on sick leave, he did not return to the army but became a fugitive Cossack. He wandered about the Don, Volga and Yaik areas, where he met fugitive peasants and workers of the Ural factories, the Cossack poor and Old Believers. During these travels he became well acquainted with the temper and needs of the people.

In September 1773 Pugachev appeared on the Yaik with a small group of Cossacks. He passed himself off as Emperor Peter III. Cossacks began to rally around him, including many who



Yaik Cossacks.

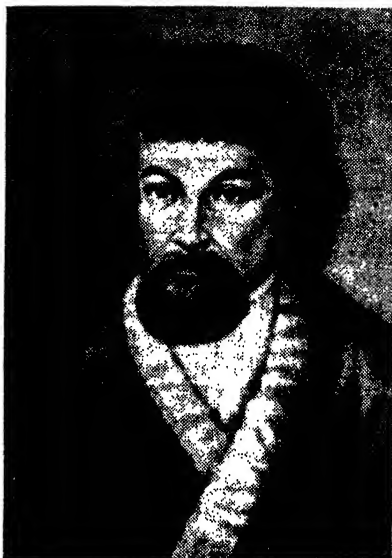
*An engraving of the 18th century*

had taken part in the uprising of 1772. Pugachev with a Cossack detachment went up the Yaik towards Orenburg. At Pugachev's approach the garrison soldiers and Cossacks of the small, poorly-fortified outposts situated along the river banks killed or bound their officers and went over to his side. At the beginning of October 1773 Pugachev appeared before the walls of Orenburg, a strong fortress with a large garrison. Unable to take it by storm Pugachev began a siege which lasted about six months.

**The Uprising of the Peasants and the Volga Peoples.** The Pugachev uprising stirred up all the peoples of the Volga steppes. Kazakh nomad camps came up to the Yaik and some of their detachments joined Pugachev's army.

Kalmucks from the steppes between the Lower Volga and the Black Sea also began to join Pugachev's army. Detachments of Tatars, Bashkirs and Cheremissi (Mari) marched to the upper reaches of the Yaik to meet Pugachev. The uprising also spread rapidly among the metallurgical workers and the Russian serf peasants of the mining and metallurgical areas. Every day new groups of peasants from the adjacent estates and workers from the metallurgical works joined Pugachev.

The Cossack uprising grew into a peasant war which roused both the Russian and non-Russian population of the Volga area. During the siege of Orenburg Pugachev and his lieutenants, who were men with military experience gained during service in the tsarist army, devoted their attention to forming peasant and Cossack detachments. The peasants and Cossacks were divided into regiments and companies. There were special regiments of Kalmucks, Bashkirs, Tatars, factory workers and others, every regiment having its own place in the camp. The men were very poorly and diversely armed. Only a few had muskets or pistols. Many were armed only with knives or merely clubs. An artillery was formed of captured cannon and put under the command of an ex-soldier. Additional guns were sent from the Urals works by the workers who made an attempt to restart the manufacture of guns and other weapons for the insurgents.



Emelyan Pugachev



Discipline in the people's army, despite Pugachev's severity, was lax. Every regiment or detachment tried to operate independently in battle. The peasants fought bravely as long as they were near their own villages, but deserted the army when it moved elsewhere.

Pugachev issued "manifestos" in the name of Emperor Peter III in which he promised the people ploughlands, woods, pasturage, waters, fisheries, salt deposits, etc. He promised to free the peasants from the "yoke of slavery" and give them back their freedom. He promised to relieve the entire population of the burdensome poll tax. He called the nobles villains and ordered them put to death. In rebelling against the landlords the peasants believed that a "good tsar" would rid them of serfdom, and in Pugachev they saw precisely such a "good tsar."

**Pugachev's Successes.** At the end of 1773 Pugachev defeated a government detachment sent under General Kar to relieve besieged Orenburg. This victory over the regular troops created a tremendous impression both in the rebel areas and in the rest of the country. The nobles were seized with panic. Even in localities hundreds of miles from the Volga landlords awaited with trepidation the appearance of the dreaded Pugachev. Large forces of the regular army under the command of General Bibikov were sent out against the insurgents.

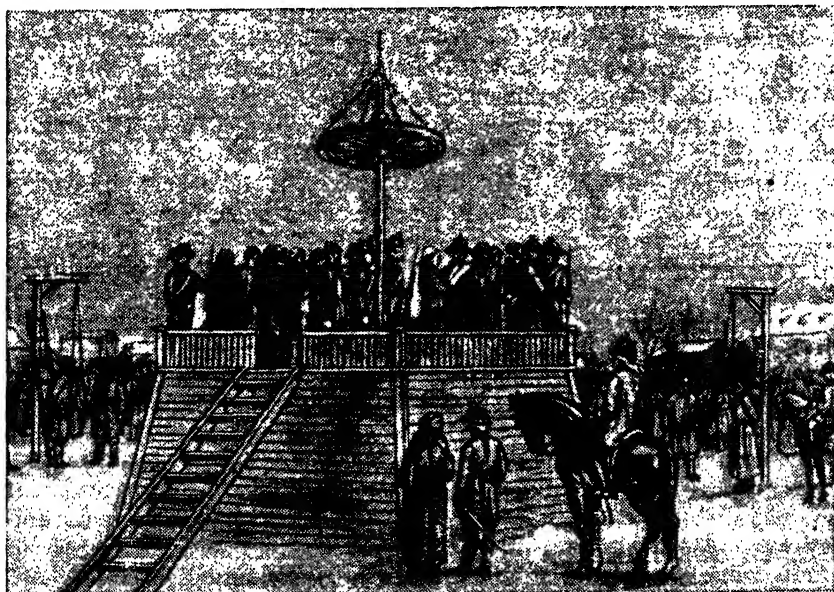
The peasant war brought forth many gifted and valiant commanders of people's detachments. The gallant Salavat Yulayev led the Bashkir cavalry. Salavat Yulayev was a poet whose songs breathed boundless love for his native land, for its fields and forests and nomad camps. Another gifted commander, Ivan Beloborodov, came from the ranks of the Urals workers. Ataman Ivan Zarubin, a simple Yaik Cossack popularly called *Chika*, on more than one occasion defeated tsarist troops. When Pugachev approached Orenburg he was met by a serf named Afanasi Khlopusha who had been sent by the governor of Orenburg to set fire to the powder stores of the insurgents and persuade the Cossacks to desert the uprising. But Khlopusha went over to the side of Pugachev and became one of his closest associates. He was put in command of a detachment and his swift and sudden attacks spread terror among the nobles.

In March 1774 Pugachev was defeated near Orenburg and compelled to raise his siege of the city. Retreating from his pursuers, he moved to Bashkiria, where his ranks were once more reinforced by local metallurgical workers, Russian peasants and Bashkirs. This enabled Pugachev to turn toward the Kama and make for Kazan, the administrative centre of the entire Volga area, whose capture would have had an important influence on the further trend of the uprising.

Pugachev came up to Kazan in July 1774. Guns were brought up to the city under cover of a supply train with hay and straw. At the same time a body of unarmed factory peasants stealthily made its

way through the gullies and suddenly attacked the town fortifications, driving off the tsarist soldiers practically with their bare hands. Then they turned a captured gun on the town and opened fire down the streets. The Bashkirs burst into the town from the other side. The tsarist garrison took refuge in an ancient fortress. Meanwhile a relief force of tsarist troops under Colonel Michelson had come up. Pugachev's forces were routed in a pitched battle near Kazan and he himself with a small detachment fled to the right bank of the Volga.

**Pursuit of Pugachev.** His severe defeat, the approach of autumn, and difficulties in obtaining provision and fodder compelled Pugachev to make for the southern steppes. On the right bank of the Volga all that remained of his army was a small detachment. But when he arrived in the densely-populated districts where there were many landlords' estates his ranks were swelled by a new influx of serfs. Soon the entire Volga area south of Nizhni Novgorod was up in arms. Towns surrendered without practically offering any resistance. Peasants rallied to Pugachev of their own accord, bringing along with them their landlords tied hand and foot. But these peasant reinforcements scattered as quickly as they rallied. The untrained peasants could not stand up against the regular troops, who pursued Pugachev relentlessly, giving him no respite. After passing through Penza, Saratov



**The execution of Pugachev.** *From a drawing by an eyewitness, Andrei Bolotov*

and Kamyshin, Pugachev at the end of August drew near to Tsaritsyn (now Stalingrad). Michelson overtook him not far from this town and routed him completely. Pugachev and a few score Cossacks managed to cross the Volga and flee to the steppes, where surrounded on all sides by his pursuers, he sought in vain for a means of escape to the Yaik.

Demoralization set in among his following, the less staunch of his Cossacks complaining that their ataman was leading them to destruction. Pugachev was seized and bound by a group of Cossack elders who handed him over to the tsarist authorities. Chained hand and foot, Pugachev was conveyed in a wooden cage to Moscow, where he was executed in January 1775. A large number of Moscow noblemen gathered to witness his execution, which was regarded as a "genuine festival for the nobility." However, the people have never forgotten Emelyan Pugachev, whose memory still lives in folk songs and legends.

The tsarist government took savage reprisals against the people who had taken part in the uprising.

The peasant uprising under Pugachev failed, as had those led by Bolotnikov, Stepan Razin and Bulavin, as well as the other, smaller, peasant uprisings. Pugachev's peasant detachments fought stubbornly only near their own villages. They were poorly armed and lacked military training. The peasants nourished the belief that a "good tsar" would improve their lot. That is why Pugachev passed himself off as the tsar. The peasants could win only with the help of the workers; but there was no working class in Russia in the 18th century. "Peasant revolts can be successful only if they are combined with revolts of the workers and if the peasant revolts are led by the workers. Only a combined revolt led by the working class has any chance of achieving its aim."\*

Though unsuccessful the peasant war of 1773-1775 played a progressive role in that it dealt a severe blow to serfdom.

## 19. THE STRENGTHENING OF THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE NOBLES

The peasant war revealed to the nobility that the machine of feudal government was not strong enough to secure the landlords' power over the masses of serf peasantry. Consequently, in 1775, after her victory in the peasant war, Catherine made an important reform in the local administration. The whole country was divided into 50 gubernias or governments, each with a population of about 300,000. The gubernias were subdivided into *uyezds* (counties) with about 30,000 inhabitants each. Governors subordinate to the supreme authority were placed at the head of the gubernias. In some cases two or three gubernias were combined under a single lord lieutenant. Ad-

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\* Stalin, *An Interview with the German Author Emil Ludwig*, p. 11, Moscow 1932.

ministration was thus made more centralized. The uyezds were administered by chief constables and by councilmen elected from among the nobles. In addition to the power they wielded as landlords the nobles now received administrative power over the entire population of their districts. Local self-government by the nobles necessitated the establishment of gubernia and uyezd associations of the nobility.

In 1785 the nobles were granted a charter confirming their right to own land and serfs. It also confirmed all the privileges previously granted them: such as immunity from corporal punishment and exemption from personal taxes. The nobles of every administrative district comprised the respective gubernia and uyezd "associations of the nobility" which enjoyed self-rule. The nobles of each uyezd met once every three years to elect an uyezd marshal of the nobility. The nobles of each gubernia met to elect the gubernia marshal of the nobility from among the uyezd marshals, as well as to elect candidates for administrative offices. The nobles received the right to make their needs known to the governor-general and, through special deputies, to the Senate and the empress.

Municipal administration was also reorganized in 1785. Every town resident became a member of a general town association which was divided into six categories. The citizens elected a mayor and deputies to the city дума which had charge of municipal affairs. The municipal administration was controlled by the upper stratum of the merchants. Administrative power in the towns was wielded by the *gorodnichi* (town bailiff) appointed by the government.

The government took special pains to increase the administrative power in the outlying provinces. Cossack self-government in the Don area was further restricted; what was left of the *Zaporozhskaya Sech* on the Lower Dnieper was done away with in 1775. The government paid particular attention to the Yaik Cossacks, who had taken an active part in the Pugachev uprising. Their name was changed to Ural Cossacks.

The reforms of 1775-1785 further strengthened the dictatorship of the nobility. The nobles received an even more centralized and stronger administrative apparatus by which they were better able to keep in touch with the popular temper and take swift measures in suppressing peasant disturbances. Catherine II was glorified in verse as the "tsaritsa of the nobility."

## 20. RUSSIA'S FOREIGN POLICY AFTER THE PEASANT WAR

**Annexation of the Crimea.** The terms of the Kuchuk Kainarji Treaty concluded with Turkey in 1774 considerably simplified the incorporation into Russia of the steppes adjoining the Black Sea and the annexation of the Crimea. Both were essential to Russia's vital

interests in the Black Sea. Although the Crimea had been recognized as an independent khanate it was not strong enough to maintain its own independence. Weakened by the war, Turkey was in no condition to give it timely assistance. The tsarist government astutely took advantage of the rivalry between the members of the ruling house of Girai. One of them, Shagin Girai, was proclaimed khan with the assistance of Russian troops brought into the Crimea. In 1783 Shagin Girai was deposed by the Russian government and the Crimea was annexed to Russia under the name of Taurida.

Following the incorporation of the Crimea, Russia recovered the fertile steppes adjoining the Black Sea, which area became known as *Novorossia*. Russian landlords pounced on the new regions and seized the best lands in the Crimea, particularly along the coast and in the fertile valleys. The population of the Tatar coastal villages were forced to the mountains. Many Tatars emigrated to Turkey. Within a short space of time large estates owned by high dignitaries and generals of the empress arose in the steppes adjoining the Black Sea. The steppes were settled quickly. Among the settlers were Russian peasants who had been forcibly transferred from the central districts, as well as Greeks, Armenians and local Tatars. General Potemkin, a favourite of the empress, was appointed governor-general to the newly-annexed territory, where he amassed great wealth. He diverted recruits from the army and settled them on his lands. New towns and fortresses arose in *Novorossia* and the Crimea. The city of Ekaterinoslav (now Dnepropetrovsk) was founded on the Lower Dnieper and was made the administrative centre of the territory. A naval base was built at Sevastopol in the Crimea. The fortress of Kherson was erected near the mouth of the Dnieper.

**The Second Turkish War.** Catherine realized that Turkey would not reconcile herself with the loss of the Crimea. In preparation for a new war with Turkey, the empress concluded an alliance with Austria.

Intensive fortification of the Crimea and the coast of the Black Sea, as well as the construction of a fleet, and of fortresses, hastened the outbreak of war with Turkey. Incited by France, who wished to weaken Russia, Turkey declared war in 1787:

The war opened with an attempt by the Turks to seize the small Russian fort of Kinburn guarding the Dnieper estuary. In a bold attack Russian troops under the outstanding commander Suvorov drove a detachment of Turks which had landed in front of the fortress back into the sea. The following year Austria entered the war on the side of Russia. At this time the Russian troops began their siege of the strong Turkish fortress of Ochakov. The Russian army operating against Turkey was under the command of Potemkin, an able but ambitious and irresolute man who even while at war permitted himself extravagant entertainments. Meanwhile the soldiers in their light coats were

suffering keenly in the trenches before Ochakov from the severe frosts and shortage of food. Disease and death was taking heavy toll. After wasting several months in inactivity, Potemkin finally gave permission for the assault of Ochakov. The Russian troops stormed and captured the strong Turkish fortress during a heavy blizzard and a bitter frost.

**The Siege and Assault of Ismail.** In 1789 Suvorov inflicted two more defeats upon the Turks; first at Focşani, then at the Rymnik. For his victory at Rymnik River he was granted the title of Count of Rymnik. Meanwhile, Austria, after a period of desultory action, concluded a separate peace with Turkey. Russia continued the war alone. In 1790 Russian troops besieged the very strong Turkish fortress of Ismail at the mouth of the Danube. The Russian army found itself in serious difficulties, particularly with the onset of winter. The troops had no siege artillery or reserves of food and fuel. Disease became rife among the soldiers. At this stage Suvorov was sent to take over command of the troops besieging Ismail. Notwithstanding the numerical superiority of the Turkish garrison, he immediately began to prepare for an assault of the fortress. On the eve of the assault Suvorov sent the commandant of the Turkish fortress a brief note demanding surrender: "I have arrived here with my troops. You are free to reflect for twenty-four hours; my first shot means you are no longer free; assault will mean death." The Turkish commander-in-chief answered: "Sooner will the Danube stop in its course and the heavens fall to earth than I surrender Ismail." At dawn, under a terrific fire from the fortress, the Russian soldiers set up ladders and scaled the walls, in places 10 to 15 metres high. A fierce hand-to-hand fight raged all day. By evening Ismail was taken. The Turks lost about 26,000 in killed.

**Victory of the Black Sea Fleet.** While the armed forces under Suvorov were achieving conspicuous successes on land the young Russian Black Sea fleet under the command of Admiral Fyodor F. Ushakov won several signal victories over the Turkish fleet. In his fight with the powerful enemy Ushakov followed Suvorov's rule: to keep the initiative in his own hands, always and everywhere to seek out the enemy, attack him suddenly, with firm determination to finish the battle with the enemy's defeat and utter destruction. Ushakov discarded the outworn tactics of naval warfare current at the time, and boldly employed new methods of warfare based on the wide use of manoeuvre tactics.

Ushakov rendered great assistance to the army on land during the siege of Ismail. When the Turkish fleet was concentrated at the mouth of the Danube Ushakov, who was closely following the enemy's movements, decided to suddenly foil the Turks, who possessed considerable superiority in number and size of battleships. The Turks were

caught unawares and had no time even to deploy for battle. Seized with panic they began to hack away the anchor ropes and retreated in full sail to the Danube delta. Ushakov, however, compelled the Turkish fleet to accept battle and, after a hot engagement, the enemy took to his heels.

On the following day Ushakov continued his pursuit. The Turkish flagship, set on fire by the Russian broadsides, sank, and another 66-gun battleship *Lord of the Sea* surrendered with all its crew. The Turks' casualties were about 2,000 men killed and drowned, while Ushakov's squadron had lost 21 men killed and 25 wounded. After this engagement the Turkish fleet no longer represented an obstacle to the land operations of the Russian army at Ismail.

By the spring of 1797 the Turks, having made good their losses in ships, still had numerical superiority over the Russian Black Sea fleet. The new Turkish naval commander gave his oath to the sultan that he would deliver "Ushak-pasha" (as the Turks called the Russian admiral) to him in a cage. By means of an excellent reconnaissance service Ushakov kept the enemy under constant observation. Upon receiving information that the Turkish fleet was concentrating off cape Kaliakria under the protection of the shore batteries Ushakov decided to attack on the Mussulman holiday. Most of the Turkish crew, unaware of the Russians' approach, were enjoying themselves ashore. Ushakov suddenly appeared before the amazed Turks, sailed past under battery fire, and cut off the Turkish fleet from the shore. A panic broke out among the Turks some of whose ships began firing on each other and collided. Ushakov on board the flagship plunged into the thick of the fray and setting an example by his own personal valour poured volleys of grapeshot from his guns at close range. The Turkish fleet was once more routed.

**Conclusion of Jassy Treaty.** The capture of Ismail by Suvorov and Ushakov's victory on the sea decided the issue of the war.

In 1791 a peace treaty was signed at Jassy, by which Turkey ceded to Russia the coast between the Southern Bug and the Dniester and agreed to recognize the incorporation of the Crimea into Russia. The Second Turkish War gave Russia complete supremacy on the northern coast of the Black Sea. Thus ended the century-old struggle for access to the ice-free waters of the Black Sea, essential to Russia's economic development. But Turkey still retained possession of the territory of present-day Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, which like the Ismail region had been part of the Kiev state in ancient times.

**The War with Sweden.** Simultaneously with the Turkish war Russia waged a war against Sweden (1788-1790). Sweden had taken advantage of the Russo-Turkish war to attempt to deprive Russia of the Baltic coast. However, all the attempts of the Swedes to break

through to St. Petersburg ended in complete failure. The war was terminated in 1790 with the conclusion of a peace under which both countries retained their former borders.

## 21. THE UKRAINE IN THE 18TH CENTURY

**Eastern Ukraine.** Before the partition of Poland the Ukraine had consisted of Eastern Ukraine (including Kiev) belonging to Russia, and Western Ukraine (west of the Dnieper), which was under Polish rule.

When Eastern Ukraine joined Russia, the land was confiscated from the Polish landlords, thereby accelerating the rise of a class of Ukrainian landlords. The Cossack elders began to increase their holdings by occupying free lands and by purchasing and seizing lands of corporate Cossackdom, in addition to which they received crown grants.

The Cossack elders elected from their own midst a hetman, his assistants and all the other representatives of Cossack authority, who also acted as the general administrative authority over the people of the Ukraine. However, the independence and power enjoyed by the Cossack elders was viewed with apprehension by the tsarist government, which strove to bring the administrative system of the Ukraine in line with that of the rest of Russia. In the course of the 18th century the tsarist government had several times abolished the office of Ukrainian hetman, which was superseded by the so-called Malorossia (Little Russia) College, i.e., a commission of generals and officers sent from St. Petersburg. The office of hetman was finally abolished in 1764.

The system of military service of the Ukrainian Cossacks was also completely reshaped. At the beginning of the 18th century most of the Zaporozhye Cossacks had migrated from the *Zaporozhskaya Sech* to the lands of the Crimean khan around the estuary of the Dnieper. In 1733, before the outbreak of the war between Russia and the Crimea, the Zaporozhye Cossacks, not wishing to fight against Russia, had moved back to a district near the Old *Sech* and formed a New *Sech*. Throughout the war they helped the Russian army by conducting reconnaissance in the steppes and attacking Tatar cavalry detachments.

After Russia had obtained a footing on the northern coast of the Black Sea the Zaporozhye Cossacks were no longer essential for the defence of the Lower Dnieper. The Crimean Tatars no longer ventured to attack the Russian borders, and, moreover, the Russian landlords who settled in the southern steppes feared having the unruly Zaporozhye freemen as their neighbours. Hence the tsarist government began more and more to restrict the rights of the Zaporozhye Cossacks.



depriving them of their lands and pursuits. In 1775 a body of tsarist troops suddenly occupied the *Sech*, whereupon more than half of the Zaporozhye Cossacks took to their boats at night and sailed down the Dnieper to Turkish territory. A few years after the breaking up of the *Sech* some of the Zaporozhye Cossacks were settled on the shores of the Azov Sea and along the lower reaches of the Kuban River. At the same time some of the Don Cossacks were also moved to the Kuban area. Thus was laid the foundation of the Kuban Cossackdom. In 1780 Eastern Ukraine received the same administrative divisions as the rest of Russia. With the introduction in the Ukraine of the poll tax in 1783 an ukase was issued which virtually enserfed the Ukrainian peasants. The ukase stipulated that "every peasant is to remain in the same village and in the same status as at the last registration." The Ukrainian nobles received similar rights to those granted the Russian nobles under the charter of 1785.

**The Haidamak Uprising Against Poland.** At the beginning of the 18th century the Polish manorial estates in Western Ukraine, which remained under Polish rule, were restored. The substantial increase in Polish grain exports in the middle of the 18th century led the landlords to extend manorial tillage and increase the *barshchina* services by the peasants. On some estates the peasants were deprived of all their arable land and livestock. Popular uprisings, however, continued to interfere with the complete consolidation of Polish rule over the Ukrainian lands. The peasants and Cossacks who participated in these uprisings were called Haidamaks.

The first big outbreak among the Haidamaks occurred in 1734 with the appearance in Western (Polish) Ukraine of Russian troops sent by the tsarist government to support King Augustus III, who had been elected by the Polish gentry. Rumours circulated among the peasants that the Russian troops had come to overthrow the rule of the Polish landlords. The tsarist government, fearing the spread of the peasant uprising, which had swept swiftly throughout the Polish part of the Ukraine, ordered its troops in Poland to take a hand in its suppression.

Another large Haidamak uprising, provoked by the brutal and arbitrary treatment of the Ukrainian population by a predacious Polish gentry, broke out in 1768. The Polish gentry plundered the Ukrainian population and tortured the captive rebels. The Haidamak movement brought to the fore several brave commanders, including Maxim Zheleznyak of Zaporozhye and the Cossack officer Ivan Gonta. The Haidamaks, enraged by the bloodthirsty atrocities and outrages committed by the gentry, wreaked their vengeance on them by seizing and devastating their hamlets and estates. Rebel detachments under Zheleznyak and Ivan Gonta captured even the well-fortified town of Uman, to which the gentry had fled in panic.

Poland was unable to cope with the Haidamaks and again solicited the aid of the tsarist government, whose troops crushed the uprising. Zheleznyak and Gonta were seized by a stratagem. Zheleznyak was sent to Siberia and Gonta handed over to the Polish gentry, who tortured him to death. The savage reprisals taken by the Polish *pans* and the gentry against the Ukrainian population exceeded all previous atrocities. The Polish *pans*, as they themselves admitted, set out "to quench the Ukrainian flame in the blood of the peasants." They addressed a proclamation to the peasants claiming that God had created the peasant to obey the *pan* unquestioningly. Many peasants fled to Russian territory to escape persecution. Polish rule in the Ukraine was completely done away with after the second partition of Poland in 1793.

**Ukrainian Culture.** Ukrainian culture was fiercely persecuted in the 18th century. The Ukrainians were prohibited from printing books in their native language. This persecution, however, could not check the progress of Ukrainian culture. Stories of the struggle of the Cossacks against the Poles were woven into ballads sung in villages and towns to the accompaniment of the folk instruments. Short plays and comedies on historical themes were performed at public fairs and in the schools. In the absence of secular education an important role was played by the Kiev Ecclesiastical Academy. Many Ukrainian writers, including Grigori Skovoroda, the national poet, philosopher and outstanding scholar of ancient classical literature, graduated from the academy. Skovoroda was born of a poor Cossack family, and wandered all his life about the Ukraine with a walking stick and a bag slung over his shoulder, in which he carried several treasured books and manuscripts. Skovoroda had a first-hand knowledge of the life and sorrows of the poor Ukrainian peasant, and his poetry, which won swift popularity among the masses, was cited in proverbs, sayings and songs.

Economic and cultural rapprochement between the Ukraine and Russia continued throughout the 18th century. Ukrainian corn as well as the products of Ukrainian industry were shipped in large quan-



Haidamak.

*From a drawing of the 18th century*

titles to the towns of Russia. From Russia the Ukraine received cotton fabrics, ironware and other manufactures. The Russian language began to gain popularity in the towns of the Ukraine.

## 22. EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY

**Education.** A very negligible part of the population, primarily the children of the nobles, received school tuition in the 18th century. In the middle of the century there were only three gymnasia: one in St. Petersburg, belonging to the Academy of Sciences, and two attached to the university in Moscow. In the late 'fifties a gymnasium was opened in Kazan. Noblemen's children could also receive instruction, primarily on general subjects, at the Cadet Corps for Nobles. The Smolny Institute for girls was opened in St. Petersburg, with separate departments for noblemen's daughters and the daughters of burghers. The Academy of Arts had been founded in St. Petersburg in Elizabeth's reign. Under Catherine big plans were drawn up for establishing educational institutions in the provinces. Only a small part of these plans was realized. "Major public schools" were established in the gubernia cities, and "Minor public schools" in some of the uyezds towns.

Enterprising people took advantage of the lack of educational institutions and organized private boarding schools in their homes. Wealthy nobles hired the services of foreign teachers and preceptors for their children. The increased demand for private teachers attracted to Russia a large number of uneducated foreigners, many of whom could barely read and write. They could pass on to their pupils only the spoken foreign language. In the middle of the 18th century French even began to replace Russian as the language of the nobility. Young noblemen spoke French fluently but had difficulty in making themselves understood in their native tongue. Home education in the families of noblemen was supplemented by the reading of foreign, primarily French, books. French literature consequently helped to spread French culture among the educated nobility.

The prevailing trend in the literature and art of Western Europe in the late 17th and early 18th centuries was classicism, a trend which expressed itself in the imitation of the art and poetry of ancient Greece and Rome. The influence of French classicism penetrated into Russia as well.

**Literature.** French influence was particularly strong in literature. Russian writers strove to imitate Racine, Molière, Voltaire and the other outstanding French writers of the 17th and 18th centuries. Russian translations from the Greek and Latin began to appear. The study of classical and Western European literature served to broaden intellectual interests and gave Russian writers new themes. Imitation

of classical and French writers not infrequently took exaggerated forms. An exponent of classicism in Russian literature in the middle of the 18th century was Alexander Petrovich Sumarokov (1718-1777).

Sumarokov was an advocate of the political enhancement of the middle nobility, whom he regarded as the bulwark of the Russian state. He was hostile to the higher court dignitaries, whose ignorance and arrogance he ridiculed in his works. Sumarokov wrote numerous works in the French style. Most notable were his historical tragedies; love lyrics, comedies and satires. Even in his tragedies on Russian historical topics, the characters spoke and acted like Greek or Roman heroes. Yet with all their defects, Sumarokov's tragedies played a positive role in that they furnished material for the first Russian theatre. Even more important were his comedies and satires, which paved the way for the development of satirical literature. Sumarokov had a high opinion of the social significance of literature. He said that Moscow, where "all the streets are paved seven feet high with ignorance" needed "a hundred Molières" to combat ignorance.

After Sumarokov's day the influence of French literature began to wane. Comedies had to be on themes from Russian life if they were to be intelligible and entertaining. In the works of Denis Ivanovich Fonvizin (1745-1792) we find a closer approach to Russian actuality, to realism. He ridiculed the vices of the contemporary nobility. Fonvizin's excellent comedies *The Brigadier* and *The Minor* presented such characters as the brigadier's shrewish and greedy wife, the stupid and malicious Prostakova, the coarse Skotinin, and the lazy and ignorant Mitrofanushka, in all of whom the contemporary reader was able to recognize types from real life.

To Gavriil Romanovich Derzhavin (1743-1816), outstanding Russian poet of the late 18th century, goes great credit for simplifying the language of poetry. Derzhavin employed in his poems the native Russian idiom and showed how musical and forceful it was. Derzhavin was the poet of the nobles' empire, the laureate of its glories and military victories. At the same time he endeavoured to expose the evils of strong rulers whose "wickedness shakes the earth, and whose iniquity startles the heavens." Derzhavin hoped, by denouncing these evils, to strengthen the feudal state.

In the second half of the 18th century Western European sentimentalism began to exercise its influence on Russian literature. The writers of this trend paid chief attention to the portrayal of the human emotions.

The foremost representative of Russian sentimentalism was Nikolai Mikhailovich Karamzin (1765-1826). *Letters of a Russian Traveller*, in which Karamzin described his foreign travels and gave Russian society a picture of life and culture in Western Europe, met with fresh success. His *Poor Liza*, a story concerning the unhappy

love of a peasant girl for a nobleman, was especially popular. Later Karamzin gave up belles-lettres and devoted himself entirely to Russian history.

Some Russian writers of the sentimental school were guilty of casting a false gloss and romantic air over the realities of the Russian countryside, where peasants and landlords were depicted amid idyllic surroundings of peace and goodwill. Two years after the suppression of the Pugachev uprising Vasili Maikov wrote a comic opera entitled *Village Festival and Virtue Rewarded*, in which a chorus of peasants sang "After paying *obrok* to the landlord, we lead a blissful life sheltered by our master."

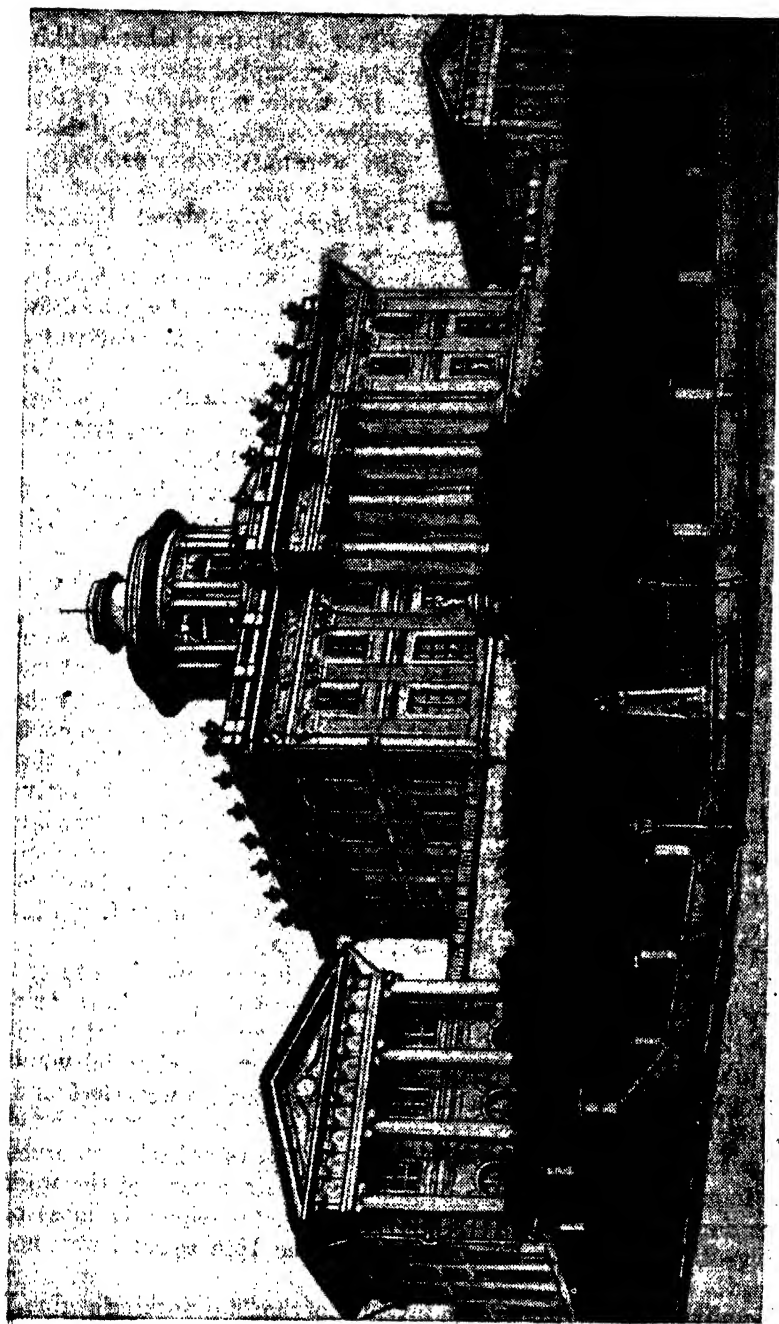
**The Theatre and Music.** The rise of the Russian dramatic theatre was linked with the revival in literature. Until the middle of the 18th century performances had been staged almost exclusively by Italian, French and German visiting actors. Under Elizabeth Petrovna the students of the Cadet Corps for Nobles, including the future writer Sumarokov, had given amateur performances at the palace. The founder of the Russian professional dramatic theatre was Fyodor Volkov, the son of a Yaroslavl merchant.

Volkov became acquainted with the theatre in St. Petersburg, where he attended performances of the Cadet Corps. When he returned to Yaroslavl, Volkov formed an amateur troupe and began to present French plays. Volkov's acting won such renown that he and his troupe were summoned to St. Petersburg by Empress Elizabeth. In 1756 the *Russian Theatre for the Performance of Tragedies and Comedies* was opened in St. Petersburg. Sumarokov was appointed director; Volkov and his companions comprised the first troupe.

Volkov died in 1763, but the Russian dramatic theatre which had come into being during his lifetime continued to develop. Volkov has been called the Father of the Russian Theatre; under him it became a permanent theatre with a professional Russian cast staging performances for the public at large.

The rich landlords, imitating the nobility of the capital, organized on their estates small theatres with serf actors. The serf actors, who were wholly at the mercy of their masters' whims, led a difficult life. There were many gifted persons among them who had no opportunity to develop their talents.

Secular music became very popular in the 18th century. Italian operas were presented at the courts of Anna Ivanovna and Elizabeth Petrovna on festive occasions. Opera in those days was regarded as an "art of the court." The growing interest in music stimulated the collection and adaptation of folk melodies, which subsequently had a great influence on Russian musical culture. Russian composers and executants began to make their appearance. Many celebrated musicians sprang from the common people, from the serfs and the poor classes of



The Pashkov Mansion in Moscow (now the All-Union Lenin Library).  
*Architector Ba-henov (end of the 18th century)*

the townspeople. A house serf of Prince Potemkin named Khandoshkin was a composer and a violinist of amazing accomplishments, equal to any western virtuoso of his time. He wrote a number of fine compositions. Yevstignei Fomin, a soldier's son, and Mikhail Matinsky, a serf owned by Count Yaguzhinsky, were outstanding composers.

The late 'seventies saw the staging of the first Russian operas of any significance: Matinsky's *St. Pe'tersburg Hos'el* and Fomin's *The Conjuring Miller*. Both composers introduced into their operas scenes from town and country life and made extensive use of folk melodies. Prominent composer of piano music was Bortnyansky, who drew widely from the world's best compositions and laid the foundation for Russian instrumental music.

**Painting and Architecture.** The development of Russian painting brought forth several celebrated artists. Among them was Ivan Argunov, a serf of Count Sheremetev, who had started his artistic career by painting the walls and ceilings of his master's palace. Levitsky and his pupil Borovikovsky achieved great mastery in portraiture, their principal subjects being rich courtiers and the higher nobility.

Important progress was also made by Russian architecture. Vasili Bazhenov, the son of a humble deacon in one of Moscow's churches, displayed unusual gifts and was educated in the gymnasium of Moscow University and in the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg. He completed his artistic education in France and Italy, where he worked under the leading painters and architects of the time and studied the monuments of antiquity and outstanding works of art. Already during this period Bazhenov became known abroad as a great artist. He received lucrative offers to remain abroad, including one from the king of France. But Bazhenov returned to Russia and placed all his energies and his prodigious gifts at the service of his homeland. One of the finest of the structures erected according to his plans is the old building of the Lenin Library (formerly the Pashkov mansion) in Moscow.

Another great Russian architect of the 18th century and a contemporary of Bazhenov was Matvei Kazakov, the son of a poor Moscow under-clerk. Kazakov drew up the plans for many monumental buildings in Moscow which are noted for their perfection, simplicity and plasticity of line. Vasili Bazhenov and Matvei Kazakov were the founders of Russian architecture.

**Inventors.** The owners of serf manufactories were little concerned with improving the technique of production, since most of the work was performed not by machines but by hand. Consequently most of the inventions made in the second half of the 18th century were not utilized.

Ivan Ivanovich Polzunov, the inventor of the "fire-working engine," was the son of a Ural garrison soldier (1728-1766). One could have expected that the invention of the steam engine would have completely

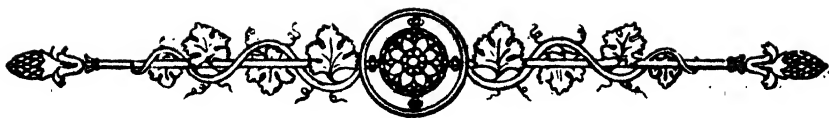
revolutionized industry. Mechanical energy was then obtained by utilizing water power, and hence factories were built near lakes or rivers. It would have lowered the cost of transporting raw material and lightened manual labour.

Basing himself upon the investigations of his great contemporary Mikhail Lomonosov, Ivan Polzunov designed and built an engine operating on steam to supply driving power to factory machines. The inventor's health had been undermined by his hard life, however, overwork led to a breakdown and Polzunov died just before the "fire-working engine" which he had built at Barnaul (in the Altai Mountains) was to be put into service. Tests had confirmed all of Polzunov's calculations. Polzunov was almost twenty-one years ahead of James Watt in inventing the world's first steam engine for the direct operation of factory machines. But his brilliant invention was forgotten. It remained for Soviet science to grant Ivan Polzunov his due as one of the world's great thinkers and innovators in the field of engineering.

Another Russian inventor of the 18th century, Ivan Petrovich Kulibin (1735-1818), the son of a Nizhni Novgorod merchant, met the same sad fate. While still a boy Ivan Kulibin saw a clock on the wall of a friend's house, and a few days later he made a similar clock out of wood. After the death of his father he ran the shop and made clocks in his spare time. Kulibin and his apprentice spent five years making a curio clock, which was then fashionable. The clock was the size of a goose egg, and every hour "gates of paradise" opened to reveal small, moving figures of angels. Kulibin presented this watch to Empress Catherine II, who by way of reward appointed him mechanic to the Academy of Sciences where he spent all his leisure and all his earnings on new inventions. His most outstanding work was an extraordinarily bold design for a single-span wooden bridge across the Neva. Kulibin built a large complete model of the bridge which wholly confirmed his plans. No practical results followed, however. The model was set up in the grounds of the Taurida Palace, where it gradually rotted away. Kulibin had many other inventions, but not one of them was applied. He died in poverty in his home town of Nizhni Novgorod (now Gorky).

Although serfdom acted as a drag on the progress of science and art, the 18th century, particularly the latter half, was a period of cultural advancement in Russia. The Russian people manifested their remarkable creative genius in literature, music, painting, architecture and engineering.





# THE DECLINE OF SERFDOM AND THE BIRTH OF CAPITALISM

## *Chapter IV*

### THE BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION IN EUROPE AND TSARISM AT THE END OF THE 18TH CENTURY

#### 23. CATHERINE'S STRUGGLE AGAINST REVOLUTION

**The French Bourgeois Revolution and Its Significance in World History.** The victory of the bourgeois revolution in France at the end of the 18th century ushered in a period of the triumph and consolidation of capitalism in the advanced countries of Europe and America. After a thousand years of domination feudalism gave way to a new system, the capitalist (bourgeois) system.

"The basis of the relations of production under the capitalist system is that the capitalist owns the means of production, but not the workers in production—the wage labourers, whom the capitalist can neither kill nor sell because they are personally free, but who are deprived of means of production and, in order not to die of hunger, are obliged to sell their labour power to the capitalist and to bear the yoke of exploitation."\*

The bourgeois revolution of 1789 made possible a more rapid development of productive forces than under feudal absolutism. In France the last vestiges of feudal service by the peasants were being abolished. Conditions favourable to the development of large-scale industry and the growth of the working class were created. The basis was laid for a new political regime—bourgeois democracy. The bour-

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\* *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, Eng. ed., p. 125, Moscow 1945.

geois system facilitated the organization and class education of the proletariat. The new social and economic order represented significant progress as compared with feudalism and ushered in a new epoch in human history. The French revolution of 1789 was the most decisive of the bourgeois revolutions, but it did no more than substitute one form of exploitation, the feudal, by another form of exploitation, the bourgeois.

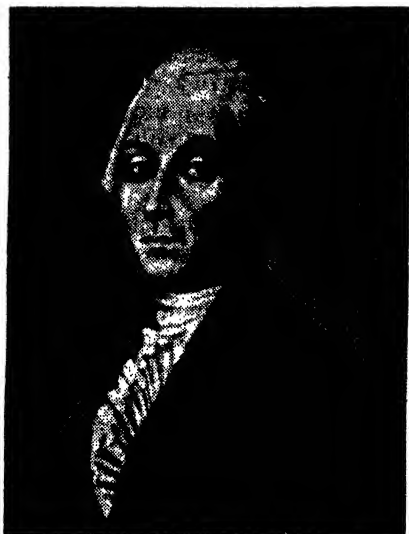
It was not until the Great October Socialist Revolution in October 1917 that exploitation of man by man was done away with and the way opened for mankind to a classless Communist society. Herein lies its fundamental difference from the French bourgeois revolution.

**Tsarist Russia in the Bloc of Counter-Revolutionary Powers.** While earlier bourgeois revolutions (in the Netherlands and in England) had not constituted a serious threat to feudalism in Europe as a whole, the French bourgeois revolution dealt a blow to absolutism and feudalism both in France and the rest of Europe. That is why the whole of feudal Europe came out against the French revolution. Tsarist Russia was an active participant in the European counter-revolution.

Catherine considered it to be the duty of all European monarchs to intervene in the revolutionary events in France. She entered into negotiations with the kings of Prussia, Austria and Sweden for a joint crusade against revolutionary France and energetically set about preparing for intervention under the slogan "the cause of the French king is the cause of all kings." She declared that she could not permit shoemakers anywhere to govern the state. After the execution of Louis XVI, Catherine was the first monarch in Europe to sever relations with the French republic. All Russian subjects living in France were recalled to Russia; Frenchmen—adherents of the revolution—were banished from Russia. French aristocrat émigrés were granted posts, pensions, palaces and estates. French teachers, governesses, cooks and craftsmen in the employ of Russian nobles were made to take an oath renouncing the "rabid and villainous government of France."

The trade agreement between Russia and France was abrogated. French ships were forbidden to enter Russian ports. Admiral Chichagov's squadron was sent to the North Sea "to curb the revolution" and to blockade France.

**Radishchev.** The French bourgeois revolution brought home to Catherine the connection that existed between the ideas of the philosophers of the enlightenment and the revolution. She embarked on resolute measures to counteract the "French plague." Till then the works of the French philosophers had enjoyed a wide circulation among the Russian nobility. Books by Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau and other philosophers were to be found in practically every nobleman's library. They were read in the original, for as a rule the young nobles knew French better than Russian. The more educated of the schoolteach-



A. N. Radishchev.

*From a portrait painted by Alexeyev*

ers and private French tutors had also helped to spread the ideas of the French enlightened school.

A representative of the progressive young nobles brought up in the spirit of the enlightenment was Alexander Nikolaevich Radishchev. He was born in 1749 and received a good education for those days, studying at the Leipzig University. During his stay abroad Radishchev became acquainted with the works of the French philosophers of the enlightenment which, on his return to Russia, he set about translating into his native tongue. He was especially attracted to the ideas of equality and liberty as expressed in the works of Rousseau. In translating the word "despotism,"

Radishchev wrote: "Autocracy is most odious to human nature." In 1790 Radishchev published his famous book *Voyage from St. Petersburg to Moscow*. The book, which was published in a private edition of 650 copies, fell into the hands of the empress and roused her to great anger. She perceived in the author a "greater villain than Pugachev" and ordered him arrested, declaring that even "ten gallows would not be enough for him." Radishchev's book, which had so horrified Catherine, depicted with unprecedented power and passion the curse of serfdom and the infamy of the autocracy which supported it.

"I looked about me and my heart was seared by the sufferings of mankind," wrote the author in the preface. He exposed the serfs' maltreatment by their landlords: "Avaricious brutes, insatiable leeches, what do we leave the peasant—only what we cannot take from him—the air he breathes. Yes, only air." Further he drew a vivid picture of peasant poverty and subjection and the unlimited power wielded over them by the landlords. "In relation to the peasant the landlord is lawmaker, judge and executor of his judgment, and, at will, a claimant against whom the defendant dare not say a word." Radishchev saw the direct connection between the autocracy and serfdom and called for the overthrow of the tears. In his ode *Liberty*, which he inserted into the *Voyage*, he wrote that the people would rise as terrible avengers

and destroy the "iron throne." He demanded the abolition of serfdom, the development of industry and agriculture, popular education, and the waging of a war against extortionate judges and the tyranny of officials. In his book Radishchev came forth as the first revolutionary, republican and enlightener from among the nobility. He was an ardent exponent of Russia following the European path of bourgeois progress and education.

Catherine declared that the "author is steeped in and infected with French delusions," and ordered him to be prosecuted for "spreading the French plague." The court

passed a sentence of death, which was commuted to ten years' exile to Siberia. At the order of the empress Radishchev's book was burned.

In 1796, after Catherine's death, Radishchev was allowed to return from Siberia by Emperor Paul I, who granted an amnesty to everyone his mother had persecuted. Radishchev, however, was prohibited from coming to the capital, and he lived on his estate. Only under Alexander I did he receive permission to live in the capital. Despite everything, Radishchev continued to defend the ideals of freedom, equality and enlightenment. In the first year of Alexander's reign he drew up a plan for state reforms based on freedom and the equality of all before the law, regardless of status. The plan was rejected and Radishchev was once more threatened with exile. Ruined in health and broken in spirit, he could not bear up under the new trials and took poison in 1802.

**Novikov.** Catherine II persecuted other "free thinkers" as well. In April 1792 she signed an ukase for the arrest of Nikolai Ivanovich Novikov, a prominent figure in the Moscow circle of Free-Masons.

Free-Masonry in Western Europe was essentially an expression of protest by the rising bourgeoisie against the oppression of the feudal church and the state. Free-Masonry was introduced into Russia in the middle of the 18th century and spread among the higher nobility. The Moscow masonic circle carried on extensive educational activity: it founded schools, printshops and a publishing house.



N. I. Novikov.

*From a portrait painted by Levitsky*

Nikolai Novikov was an active member of the Moscow Free-Masons in the 'eighties. Bishop Platon, who investigated Novikov's publications on the instructions of Catherine, found that these were "most pernicious books which corrupt good morals and contrive to undermine the pillars of the holy faith," meaning the works of the Encyclopaedists. Novikov published eight books by Rousseau, fourteen by Voltaire, two by Diderot, and others.

Novikov opened a large number of bookshops, at one of which he organized a public library, the first in Moscow. He published a satirical magazine entitled *Tru'en* (The Drone) and later the magazines *Zhivopisets* (The Painter) and *Koshelyok* (The Purse). His satire had great social significance, exposing as it did the social ulcers on the body of Russia. Novikov laid bare the reactionary conservatism, ignorance and arrogance of the nobility, which considered the sciences to be "mere trifles unworthy of the attention of noblemen." He ridiculed the fashionable craze for everything foreign. He exposed the faults in administration—the bribery, speculation and red tape. Novikov gave a particularly trenchant and faithful description of the serfs, crushed by want and despotism.

In *The Correspondence of a Master With the Peasants of His Village*, and particularly in *The Painter*, Novikov depicted the wretched lot of the serfs.

Novikov's pointed satire roused Catherine's displeasure. And she considered the Masonic organization which he had activitized to be even more dangerous than his magazines. Novikov was arrested and imprisoned in the Schlüsselburg Fortress, the bookshops and press of the Moscow circle were closed, and his companions arrested. Without benefit of trial, simply at the fiat of the empress, Novikov was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment in the fortress. His property was confiscated by the state. The empress ordered "all the books published by Novikov to be handed over to the court one and all." Novikov was released by Paul I. Ruined, ill and lonely, he died in 1818 at the age of 74.

**The Second Partition of Rzecz Pospolita.** Under the influence of the French bourgeois revolution the progressive elements of Polish society grew increasingly dissatisfied with the domestic and international position of their country, which was in the throes of a grave political crisis. With the development of capitalism in Europe and in Poland itself, the Polish state could be saved from political extinction only by the abolition of serfdom and by a democratic reorganization of the state.

With the support of the rising bourgeoisie the progressive strata of the gentry formed a bloc of the gentry and the bourgeoisie. Its leaders convened the "great" or four-year Diet (1788-1791) which adopted a constitution on May 3, 1791. The constitution, drawn up under the influence of the French bourgeois constitution of 1791, abolished the election of the king, repealed the *liberum veto* and established a new voting

procedure under which questions were decided in the Diet by a simple majority. However, the constitution did not affect either the gentry's privileges or serfdom, which remained intact. The constitution was opposed by the Polish magnates who did not want to lose their old feudal privileges. They formed a Confederation in Targowica which appealed to Catherine for help "in the name of the protection and preservation of Rzecz Pospolita against those who have forgotten that they were born free gentry." Catherine, fearing the influence of the French revolution in Poland, sent in an army of 100,000. The Diet called upon the Polish people to rise up in battle "for the altar, for freedom and for property." But the weak Polish army of 30,000 men was no match for the Russian army. State power was transferred to the magnates. Adherents of the May 3 constitution, including General Kosciuszko of the Polish army, emigrated.

Prussia, alarmed by the successes of the French revolution, which had gained sympathy in democratic circles in Poland and Prussia, sought an alliance with Russia against Poland. Prussian troops crossed the Polish border, and in January 1793 Prussia and Russia effected a second partition of Poland, by which Russia received part of Byelorussia, including Minsk, Volhynia and Podolia, a territory with a population of three million Byelorussians and Ukrainians. Prussia occupied Poznan, Kalisz, Częstochowa, Thorn and Danzig, localities with a predominantly Polish population.

**The Third Partition of Rzecz Pospolita.** The party of the bourgeoisie and the gentry, resenting the partition of Poland, formed a conspiracy against Russian tsarism. The conspiracy was headed by General Kosciuszko, who had secretly returned to Poland. Kosciuszko, who was a member of the Polish gentry, strove to create a strong and independent bourgeois Poland. He sympathized with the ideas of the French bourgeois enlighteners and had fought in the war waged by the English colonies in North America for their independence.

Upon his return to Poland Kosciuszko organized a rebellion in Cracow. The successful operations of the Polish rebel troops forced the tsarist army to retreat. A provisional government headed by Kosciuszko was set up at Warsaw. But the uprising in Poland was not widely supported by the masses. The Polish peasants who had joined the uprising in the hope of receiving land from the new revolutionary government, began to desert Kosciuszko's army, disappointed at the government's failure to provide them with land or even do away with landlordism.

The peasants who lived in the Byelorussian and Ukrainian parts of Poland did not want to support their oppressors, the Polish squires, and did not join the uprising. In Lithuania the uprising assumed larger proportions. A Lithuanian provisional government was set up at Vilno, but it acted independently of Kosciuszko. The irresolute and unrev-

lutionary tactics of the leaders prevented the attainment of unity between the insurgent forces of Poland and Lithuania.

The tide of rebellion in Poland beginning to ebb, the tsarist troops launched an offensive against Poland. In June 1794 revolutionary Cracow surrendered to the Prussian troops. In August the tsarist troops captured Vilno.

The revolutionary masses of Warsaw rose in rebellion, accusing the government of treachery. Kosciuszko ordered the leaders of the Warsaw rebellion hanged. Soon after, Kosciuszko's army was defeated and he himself taken prisoner. On October 24, 1794, Russian troops under Suvorov took Warsaw by storm.

The Kosciuszko uprising was defeated. It might have been successful only in conjunction with a peasant revolution, but the gentry were afraid of revolution and did not permit it to develop.

After taking reprisals against the rebels, Russia, Prussia and Austria carried out a third partition of Poland (1795). Under the third partition the western part of Volhynia, the western part of Byelorussia, Lithuania including Zhmudia, and Courland went to Russia; the northwestern part of Poland, including Warsaw, went to Prussia, and the southwestern part, including Cracow, to Austria. Poland as an independent state ceased to exist.

The partitions of Poland were to have facilitated the united struggle of the feudal monarchs of Europe against revolutionary France. In 1795 tsarist Russia concluded an agreement with England against the French revolution. England promised a substantial subsidy. Catherine was to send an army of 60,000 under the command of Suvorov against France. Her death, on November 6, 1796, prevented the realization of these plans.

## 24. PAUL I (1796-1801)

**Home Policy.** Paul I, Catherine's heir, was brought up by his grandmother Elizabeth, who had taken him from his parents at birth.

The relations between Catherine and her son turned from cool to hostile. Paul regarded the coronation of his mother as a violation of his rights as heir. Catherine feared her rival son and kept him away from state affairs. Paul sharply criticized Catherine's entire system of state administration; he particularly hated her favourites. Banned from participation in state affairs, Paul devoted himself wholly to military pursuits at Gatchina, an estate presented to him by his mother. He turned Gatchina into an army camp complete with gates, turnpikes and barracks, and introduced the army regulations of Frederick II, the Prussian army uniform and a rigorous stick discipline.

The first thing Paul did when he became emperor was to change all his mother's arrangements his own way. First of all he decided to

take the guards and the army in hand, and introduced strict Prussian military drill. From early morning there were changes of the guards and military exercises in exact imitation of the Prussian style; the soldiers were dressed in Prussian uniforms and wore curled hair and queues exactly like the Prussians. The capital itself resembled an army camp. Entrance into and exit from the city was under strict control. Turn-pikes painted in black and white stripes were set up at the outposts.

Paul I wanted to introduce army barracks discipline into all phases of state activity. He regarded this as the best way of combating revolution, which he hated no less than Catherine had.

He restricted the number of foreigners entering Russia and prohibited Russian nobles from going abroad to study in the universities. The importation into Russia of all books, "no matter in what language they be written, as well as music" was banned. Paul ordered all private printshops closed down and established an ecclesiastical and secular censorship.

Paul's endeavours were directed towards a strict centralization of power in the interests of the feudal nobility. As autocrat, he considered himself the sole source of power. His executive assistant was the procurator-general. "You and I, I and you—we alone will run things," Paul said to one of his procurator-generals. When a nobleman passed the



Rebel peasants destroying a landlord's estate at the end of the 18th century.

*From a drawing by Stern*



*Список купленных людей*

Товари Пётр куплен за 2500 руб } за долю Пётр и  
Николай куплен за 400 руб } Рачавлева. -

Андрей куплен за 600 руб, Пётр и Пётр

Куплен Иван и Иван и в Петербург, по перебору долгу  
Кристиана, Рачавлева, Рачавлева, Дороса за  
1500 рублей

Добра. Насоса с Иваном

Добра. Никола

Добра. Анна

Андрей

Иван Куплен

куплен из разных до-  
мов в Москве, которые  
долги, так как и в  
за Иван куплен за  
книжки

"A list of people purchased."

*From the Archives of the Historical Museum*

royal turnout on the street he had to get out of his own carriage and pay due homage. Like his predecessors, Paul defended the class interests of the serf-owning landlords. He gave generous grants of land and state peasants to those of the nobles who were in his good graces. In the four years of his reign he handed out more than 300,000 peasants, turning them into privately-owned serfs.

Paul regarded the nobility as the first estate in the realm, from whom he expected military service. In violation of the ukase on "liberties of the nobility," which had abolished obligatory military service, he ordered the nobles to take up their duties in the regiments in which they had been registered and in which they had received ranks without serving. Nobles who evaded state service were banished from the capital.

His policy in relation to the peasantry followed Catherine's serfage policy to the letter. At a parade in St. Petersburg the assembled serfs handed the tsar a petition asking to be freed from the "tyranny of the landlords." "Such insolence," says Bolotov, a writer of the period, "was mercilessly punished at the emperor's order by public flogging to instill fear in the hearts of others and to keep them from annoying him with such absurd requests."

Peasant disturbances during Paul's reign spread to 32 gubernias out of a total of 52. The tsar demanded that the peasant uprisings be crushed without mercy.

At the beginning of March 1797 Paul sent a military force under Field Marshal Repnin to suppress a peasant uprising in the village of Brasovo (Orel Region). Shortly afterwards the tsar received a report announcing complete victory over the peasants: "Thirty-three cannon shots and 600 small arms shots were fired during the operations; a fire broke out and 16 houses were burned. Twenty were killed and seventy wounded."

Fearing further outbreaks among the peasantry, Paul issued an order in April 1797 prohibiting the *barshchina* (corvée) on Sundays and recommending the landlords to confine themselves to three days of the *barshchina* a week. The landlords did not obey the order. They intensified their exploitation of the serfs and made regular slaves out of their household serfs.

The government newspaper continued to print daily announcements of the sale and exchange of serfs. Here is one of the numerous advertisements: "For sale: two household serfs, one of whom is a whip and bootmaker, 30 years old, married; his wife is a laundress and can tend cattle, and is 25 years old; the other is a musician and singer, 17 years old; plays on the bassoon and sings bass. Also a grey gelding, 3 years old, tall, English breed, not broken in. For price apply 17-1 Arbat, Apt. 1."

**Paul's Foreign Policy.** When Paul came to the throne Russia was in a state of war with France, in pursuance of the Russian-English treaty of alliance of 1795. Russia had been engaged in ruinous, uninterrupted warfare for almost forty years, in the course of which the Russian empire had greatly extended its territory and now occupied an area of 331,000 square miles, with a 17,000 mile-long frontier. The population of the empire had increased as a result of these conquests from 25,000,000 to 37,000,000 in a century. Almost half of the state budget was spent on the army, which by the end of Catherine's reign numbered 500,000 men.

On ascending the throne Paul declared that it was his intention to give Russia "the rest she so badly needs and desires." He revoked the new conscription announced by Catherine and informed the English ambassador that the auxiliary corps she had promised against the French could not be sent. However, Paul promised his allies "to oppose in all ways possible the rabid French republic, which threatens all Europe with complete destruction of law, rights and morality."

The English government replied that it had no choice but to content itself with the Russian auxiliary squadron operating in the North Sea. At the same time England, together with Austria, sought for ways and means of drawing Russia into more active participation in the war

against France. The English suggested that Paul occupy the Island of Corsica, calculating that there Russia would have to bear the brunt of the main French drive. The Island of Malta, which Napoleon had seized on his way to Egypt, was the most important strategic point in the Mediterranean Sea. The Maltese Order to whom the island belonged was connected with the court of the tsar, and appealed to Paul for help, bestowing on him the title of Grand Master of the Order. Like Catherine before him, Paul was desirous of "obtaining a firm foothold in the Mediterranean" while at the same time creating a fighting base against the French revolution, and so he promised to assist the Maltese Order. Fearing that Turkey would league herself with France, he ordered the naval forces in the Black Sea to be reinforced and the fleet and coastal fortresses speedily prepared for war. When Turkey saw that the objective of Napoleon's expedition was Egypt, a part of the Turkish empire, she concluded a military alliance with Russia against France.

In August 1798 Admiral Ushakov, commander of the Russian Black Sea fleet, received orders to proceed with his squadron to the Bosphorus and, if the occasion arose, "immediately to follow and assist the Turkish fleet against the French regardless of consequences." Ushakov's squadron consisted of 16 ships carrying 792 guns with a crew of 8,000 sailors and soldiers.

In the course of six weeks Ushakov occupied four small islands of the Ionian Archipelago, after which he set about to capture the fortress on the island of Corfu, considered to be an impregnable naval citadel. The French garrison of the fortress was about 3,000 strong with 650 guns. The Russian sailors, on the other hand, were handicapped by a shortage of the most necessary supplies, food and shells. Indeed, they were starving. Ushakov wrote: "I know of no example in all ancient history where a fleet has been so far out without any supplies and in such an extremity as we are now." The difficulties, however, did not daunt Ushakov and his brave sailors. The men had the same implicit faith in their admiral as Suvorov's soldiers had in their general. On February 18, 1799, after a fierce assault of the forward fortifications the French garrison on Corfu surrendered.

The swift capture of Corfu by the Russians created a deep impression in Europe and delighted Suvorov who jestingly declared that he was sorry he was not serving as a midshipman under Ushakov. Having ousted the French troops from the islands Ushakov introduced a republican form of government for the indigenous population.

Following the capture of Corfu a Russian naval descent was landed in Southern Italy, where the sailors supported the popular rising against Napoleon and occupied Naples and Rome. The Ionian expedition was Ushakov's last accomplishment. He spent the rest of his life in retirement in the Tambov gubernia where he had been born. Ushakov died in 1817.

Ushakov, like Suvorov, had never throughout his long fighting experience lost a single battle. He was the founder of the Russian school of naval warfare which had given Russia many brilliant admirals.

By the beginning of 1799 a new coalition consisting of Russia, England, Austria, Turkey and the kingdom of Naples had been formed against republican France. In January 1799 the French defeated the Neapolitan army and proclaimed a republic in Naples. Paul sent a corps of 11,000 men to the aid of the king of Naples, with orders to march through Austrian territory and join a corps of 20,000 that had been sent out previously to help Austria. A third corps (under Rimsky-Korsakov), which originally had been assigned to Prussia, was also ordered to "restore the thrones and altars."

The Austrian archduke (the heir to the throne of Austria), a young man with no military experience, was commander-in-chief of the allied forces in Northern Italy. The Austrian government asked the Russian emperor to appoint Suvorov, the great Russian general, to act as the archduke's "aide and guide."

**General Suvorov.** Alexander Vasilievich Suvorov, the famous Russian general, son of a former officer of the Preobrazhensky Regiment, was born in Moscow in 1730. He was a weak, sickly child, and his father, contrary to the custom among the nobles of that time, did not enter him in a regiment at an early age and did not prepare him for military service. However, the boy early displayed an interest in military matters. He read the military books in his father's library voraciously, and enthusiastically fought imaginary engagements. To harden himself he took cold showers, refused to wear warm clothes in winter and would go horseback riding in the pouring rain.

At twelve he was entered on the rolls of the Semyonovsky Regiment as a private, and at seventeen he began military service as a corporal. His exceptional military gifts brought him promotion to high rank, and after his brilliant feats in the Turkish and Polish campaigns he was made a field marshal.

Suvorov was a military genius with a remarkable intellect and an iron will; in addition, he was exceptionally industrious, and profoundly interested in the history of wars. He constantly analysed his own campaigns and studied the operations of Caesar, Hannibal, Alexander the Great and other soldiers of world renown. Fighting continuously in the numerous wars of the 18th century—against the Germans, Turks, Poles and French—Suvorov independently worked out principles of the art of warfare which coincided on many points with the advanced military views of the period of the French bourgeois revolution.

Suvorov demanded that theory always be combined with practice. "No battle can be won in the study, and theory without practice is a dead letter," he wrote in his autobiography. He compiled an excellent work entitled *The Science of Victory*. This was a manual for soldiers

and officers which he wrote in Tulchin, where he was sent at the close of Catherine's reign to command one of the southern armies. The manual was written in concise, simple and clear language, and gave exact and easily remembered definitions. Suvorov demanded that soldiers be given thorough physical and military training. A soldier needs more than military bearing, Suvorov said. He should be trained not for the parade ground but for the battlefield. "Do things at manoeuvres as you would on campaign." In *The Science of Victory* he wrote: "Easy on the training ground, hard in battle; hard on the training ground, easy in battle."

Suvorov trained his soldiers to be cool, courageous, and staunch in battle. He demanded that every soldier understand the purpose behind his actions and the military task which confronts him. "Every soldier must understand his manoeuvre," he said. Suvorov's strategy and tactics may be reduced to three important rules of warfare: visual judgment, swiftness, attack. The essence of visual judgment is the ability correctly to determine the main enemy, to take the terrain into account and use it to good advantage, and to ascertain the enemy's fighting qualities. When a correct plan of strategy has been drawn up, speed and attack are essential for its realization. Suvorov demanded that the enemy be attacked before he has a chance to collect his wits, rally his forces and prepare to resist. The soldier must be trained not for defence and retreat but to deal the enemy a bold and crushing blow. Suvorov had a high opinion of the bayonet charge and storming operations at the decisive moment in battle. "The bullet's a fool, the bayonet's the thing," he said.

At the same time Suvorov demanded efficient utilization of musket and artillery fire. "Shoot rarely, but squarely," Suvorov taught his men. "Look after your weapon and keep it clean, but do not burnish the iron—it is no good for the weapon and a waste of the soldier's time and labour. . . . Train the soldier to load quickly but accurately, to take exact aim and to fire correctly and rapidly. Teach him to run quickly, to crawl without attracting notice, to take cover in holes and depressions, to hide behind rocks, bushes and mounds, and to fire from cover, reloading on his back. . . ." With instructions like these Suvorov taught his soldiers proficiency and the art of practical warfare. He had a high opinion of the fighting qualities of the Russian soldiers and was ever solicitous of their welfare. "A soldier must be healthy, brave, firm, determined, truthful and pious," he declared.

Whereas the entire tsarist military system regarded the soldier as an automaton, Suvorov looked upon the Russian soldier as a man endowed with reason and acumen, and demanded of him initiative and resourcefulness.

Suvorov lived in close contact with the soldiers, ate the same soup and gruel, wore a simple uniform, and rode a Cossack mount. The sol-

diers were wholeheartedly devoted to their commander and never suffered defeat under him.

Suvorov's views on the science of warfare and his treatment of the soldiers met with opposition from the officers who were for the most part members of the landed gentry brought up on the outmoded Prussian system of Frederick II. Engels criticized this system severely: "Frederick, besides laying the foundation for that pedantry and martinetism which have since distinguished the Prussians, actually prepared them for the unparalleled disgrace of Jena and Auerstädt."



A. V. Suvorov

Emperor Paul was a particularly ardent admirer of the automatism of the Prussian military system. "The soldier is simply a machine, stipulated by the regulations," he declared.

Under Paul I the old Prussian uniform was reintroduced into the army: the soldiers were obliged to wet their hair with *kvass*, sprinkle it with flour and allow it to harden; 14-inch iron rods were fastened to the back of their heads to shape pigtails; false locks were worn over the temples. Petty punctuality and blind obedience were demanded. Suvorov ridiculed these Prussian practices as unsuitable for a real, fighting army. "Hair powder is not gunpowder, false locks are not guns, and pigtails are not sabres, and I am not a German but a born Russian," he said. Suvorov did not comply with the new regulations and continued to train his men according to his own system. Amidst the prevalent atmosphere of mute servility Suvorov's conduct was a bold challenge to the tsar. In 1797 Paul banished Field Marshal Suvorov to his impoverished estate of Konchanskoye and kept him under humiliating surveillance.

**The Alpine Campaign.** On the insistence of his English and Austrian allies Paul recalled Suvorov from exile at the beginning of 1799 and appointed him commander-in-chief of the allied forces operating against the French who had occupied Italy and Switzerland.

In three and a half months the Russian troops under Suvorov defeated the armies of the best French generals. All of Northern Italy was

cleared of the French. Austria, Paul's ally, wanted undivided rule in Italy and decided to transfer Suvorov to Switzerland, ostensibly to relieve the Russian army under Rimsky-Korsakov. Suvorov left Italy for Switzerland, making for the town of Altdorf via the St. Gothard Pass, whence he was to go on to join Rimsky-Korsakov's troops. Scaling the almost perpendicular mountains under a biting wind, Suvorov's men launched a frontal attack on St. Gothard. Bagration's column outflanked the French. St. Gothard was captured in September. Beyond St. Gothard the road fell away to the Reuss, a mountain river, spanned at a height of 75 feet by a flimsy structure known as Devil's Bridge.

As they retreated before the onslaught of Suvorov's men the French destroyed part of the bridge. Russian soldiers crawled up to the broken bridge piles, bound some logs together with scarfs and belts and threw them over the gap. The soldiers ran across the logs to the other side under a hail of bullets. Meanwhile other dauntless men had waded across the turbulent river. The Russians went into a bayonet charge and drove back the French. Beyond Altdorf the St. Gothard road came to an end at the shore of Lake Lucerne, which was under the control of the French. Before the Russian army towered the sheer slopes of another almost impassable mountain ridge, but there was no choice. Exhausted and hungry, Suvorov's men began the difficult climb of an even steeper mountain. They reached the valley to learn that Rimsky-Korsakov's army had been defeated and was retreating, and that the French held the valley. Suvorov's army was in a trap. The French had 60,000 men, while Suvorov had less than 20,000. Besides, the Russians had no provisions, no ammunition and no artillery. Suvorov realized that his army, surrounded in the mountains by enemy forces, was in a critical position. But at the council of war he declared: "What shall we do? To go back would be a disgrace: I have never yet retreated. To proceed to Schwyz is impossible. Massena has over 60,000 men, while we have barely 20,000. Moreover, we have no provisions, ammunition or artillery. . . . We cannot expect assistance from anywhere. . . . We have only one hope . . . the courage and self-sacrifice of my troops. We are Russians!" After beating off the French, Suvorov's army, on the night of October 4 began the final stage of its march across the Alps by way of the difficult snow-capped Panixer Pass.

The mountain was high and steep, cut frequently by deep precipices. In places the soldiers crawled on all fours along the icy crust under the sleet and snow. Suvorov went among his men, encouraging them: "Never mind, never mind! A Russian fellow isn't yellow, we'll get through." On one of the slopes there was not a single tree or protruding rock to offer support. Thousands of men seated themselves on the icy edge of the slope and, hugging their rifles, slid down. No more than 15,000 men remained of Suvorov's army after the crossing

of the Panixer Pass. Engels subsequently described it as the most outstanding crossing of the Alps in modern times. As one old soldier aptly expressed it, "the Russian bayonet broke through the Alps."

Suvorov was going on 70 then. Left in the lurch by his Austrian allies, he stayed on in Switzerland until Paul broke off the alliance with Austria.

**The Change in Paul's Foreign Policy and the Conspiracy of March 11, 1801.** Suvorov's victories in Italy intensified the antagonisms within the Anglo-Austro-Russian coalition. The Austrians began secret peace negotiations with the French. Whenever the French approached, the Austrians betrayed the Russians by leading their own army off into the rear. After finally "ousting Suvorov" (as he expressed it himself) from Northern Italy which he had recaptured, the Austrians seized the territory of the king of Sardinia, to whom the Russian army had given military support, and made the Russian navy leave Italian waters. After a series of such perfidious acts on the part of his Austrian allies, Paul wrote the Austrian emperor a letter announcing his withdrawal from the alliance: "I shall in future cease to concern myself with your interests and shall look after my own and those of my other allies." Paul ordered Suvorov to start on his return march to Russia: "You were to have saved kings," he wrote, "now you must save the Russia's warriors and the honour of your sovereign." Suvorov overcame great difficulties in leading the Russian troops out of Switzerland. The title of generalissimo of all the armed forces of Russia was bestowed on him as a reward. Later Suvorov again fell into the tsar's disfavour. He returned to Russia completely broken in health.

As he neared St. Petersburg Suvorov learned that all preparations that had been made for his triumphal reception had been cancelled. He was to arrive in the capital at night to avoid a demonstration of public welcome. The tsar prohibited Suvorov from appearing at court. His illness grew worse, and on May 18, 1800, the great Russian general died in solitary humiliation.

Suvorov was accompanied to his last resting place by his old companions-in-arms and a vast cortege. After the funeral the famous poet Derzhavin wrote a poem on the death of Suvorov in which he said, "The lion's heart, the eagle's wings, are no longer with us. How are we to fight?"

Meanwhile relations between Paul and England grew more strained. When the English occupied Malta, the exasperated Paul announced the confiscation of all British ships and cargoes in Russian ports. Napoleon lost no time in turning the discord between the allies to his own advantage. He declared his readiness to cede Malta to Paul after it was captured from the English and to release all his Russian



prisoners with full equipment and without demanding any prisoners in exchange. In December 1800 Paul and Napoleon began a personal correspondence concerning peace terms and a joint struggle against England. In a memorandum outlining the principles of Paul's new foreign policy, the rupture with England is explained by the fact that England "by her envy, cunning and wealth was, is, and will be, not the rival, but the villainous enemy of France." The memorandum stated further, "By means of threats, intrigue and money England set all the powers against France" (here Paul I added, "and us sinners as well").

Through an alliance with Napoleon Paul also hoped to stifle the French revolution, for Napoleon had set up a military dictatorship in France after the *coup d'état* of November 9 (18 Brumaire) 1799. The overthrow of English rule in India was one of the joint measures to be undertaken by Russia and France. In January 1801 Paul ordered a detachment of Don Cossacks to proceed through Orenburg "via Bokhara and Khiva straight to the Indus River." This totally unprepared Indian campaign was called off by the new emperor, Alexander I, soon after the death of Paul.

During the last months of his life Paul began to display more interest in Transcaucasia, as a possible route to Persia and India. On January 18, 1801, he issued a manifesto announcing the voluntary union of Georgia with Russia.

Paul's belligerent measures caused no little anxiety in England. The British ambassador at St. Petersburg supported the organization of a conspiracy by the upper nobility who were discontented with Paul's policy and his cruelty and follies.

The Russian landlords, interested as they were in restoring economic relations with England, to whom they sold grain and other Russian produce, were particularly dissatisfied with the anti-English turn in Paul's foreign policy. On the night of March 11, 1801, the conspirators, with the connivance of Alexander, the crown prince, broke into the emperor's chamber and assassinated him.

## Chapter V

# TSARISM DURING THE NAPOLEONIC WARS

## 25. THE DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY OF ALEXANDER I (up to 1812)

**Alexander I (1801-1825).** The accession of Alexander I was hailed with joy by the entire nobility, who hoped to find him a more consistent and more tractable medium for their policy than his highly unbalanced father. "Silenced is the roar of the gruff North Wind,

closed is the awful, fearsome glance," the poet Derzhavin wrote of the assassinated tsar in a panegyric on Alexander's accession. The new tsar had received a European education under the supervision of his grandmother, Catherine II. She placed him under the tutelage of a Swiss moderate republican named Laharpe, who discussed liberal topics with Alexander. Alexander had also devoted much time to the parade ground and to the subtleties of Prussian military art. In his youth he had become friendly with General Arakcheyev, Paul's favourite, a brutal advocate of serfdom, who had exercised no less influence on the heir apparent than Laharpe. Contemporaries had good reason for saying that the new emperor was "half a citizen of Switzerland and half a Prussian corporal."

Under the dual influence of Catherine's court with its intrigues, subterfuge and favouritism, and of Paul's "little court" at Gatchina where Catherine was cordially detested, Alexander developed his characteristic traits of duplicity, hypocrisy, cowardice and cruelty, concealed beneath an outward air of affability and liberalism. Alexander was suave and amiable in his dealings with people. Contemporaries relate that the tsar prepared for his receptions and public appearances like a clever actor, rehearsing elegant bows and gracious smiles.

Pushkin called Alexander "a weak and sly ruler upon whom glory unexpectedly smiled."

**The Decline of Serfdom.** Alexander's reign commenced at a time when the industrial revolution was making further progress in Europe and serfdom was declining in Russia.

Since the last quarter of the 18th century the wholesale impoverishment of the peasantry became particularly manifest. Peasants abandoned their run-down farms to follow other pursuits elsewhere. In the non-black-earth regions there was a rise in the peasant crafts, while in the black-earth regions the production of grain for the market increased. The landlords extended their cultivated area, as did the more well-to-do serfs and state peasants. The expansion of the domestic market was accompanied by a growth in the foreign market. The Russian landlords became suppliers of agricultural produce for export, chiefly to England.

The development of home and foreign trade necessitated improvement of the means of communication, chiefly river and sea routes. In 1803 the North Catherine Canal joining the Kama and Northern Dvina rivers was built. In 1804 the Oginsky Canal, which linked the Baltic and Black seas, was completed. The first decade of Alexander's reign saw the completion of the Mariinsk and Tikhvin canal systems, which facilitated the transportation of goods along the rivers linking inland Russia with the Baltic Sea. The decline of feudal economy, which was of a self-sufficient character, increased the demand for money and created a need for regulation of exchange operations. To

this end the State Loan Bank was established in St. Petersburg in 1786 and the Commercial Bank in Moscow in 1807. At the opening of the 19th century banking houses were established in Moscow, Archangel, Taganrog and Feodosiya.

New industrial enterprises arose to meet the demands of the home market. In 1804 seven sugar refineries were in operation; in 1812 there were 30. In 1808 the first cotton spinning mill was established. By 1812 manufactories operated by merchants constituted 62% of all the enterprises, landlords owning only 16%. The workers at most of the manufactories, however, were serf-peasants paying *obrok* (quit-rent) to their landlords.

The productivity of forced peasant labour was low both in industry and in agriculture. Peasant cultivation of manorial lands was of a poor quality. Crop yields were low. To obtain more grain the landlords increased the *barshchina* and other services by the peasants. Intensified exploitation of the serfs led to peasant uprisings, which assumed particularly large proportions in the Baltic regions, where capitalism had begun to develop earlier than in Central Russia. In the autumn of 1802 the peasants on a number of estates in the Liflandia Region refused to render manorial services, and engaged in regular skirmishes with the soldiers sent to subdue them.

**Alexander's Domestic Policy.** Fearing revolution, Alexander considered certain state reforms essential in order to avoid it. In a letter to Laharpe while still heir apparent he had stated that when he became tsar he would "grant the country freedom and thereby prevent it from becoming a toy in the hands of madmen."

Upon his accession Alexander declared that he would rule in accordance "with the laws and the spirit" of his grandmother, Catherine II. He immediately restored all the privileges of the nobles, reinstated all the nobles who had been exiled by his father, lifted the ban on the import of goods and books from abroad, permitted foreign travel and issued an ukase abolishing torture and the secret police.

In the early years of Alexander's reign the circle of "young friends" of the emperor (Stroganov, Novosiltsev, Kochubey, Czartoryski) attained great influence and constituted the Private Committee for the Drafting of State Reforms. These drafts did not really aim at cardinal reforms, since they were motivated by a desire to preserve the system of serfdom and the autocracy and to make only superficial changes in the feudal state in keeping with the spirit of the times. Thus, an ukase of December 12, 1801, allowed merchants, burghers and state peasants to purchase unsettled land, without in any way affecting the serf basis of land tenure by the nobility. Another ukase (February 20, 1803) "on free tillers" permitted landlords to release peasants with land singly or in entire villages on terms to be fixed by voluntary agreement with the peasants. But few peasants were

able to benefit by this ukase: in all 47,153 persons, or less than one-half per cent of the serf population of the empire were freed. According to the ukase the serfs had to pay huge redemptions — sometimes as much as 5,000 rubles—for their emancipation. Thus, although the solutions found for the peasant question were called forth by the development of bourgeois relations, they in no way shook the foundations of serfdom.

The establishment in 1802 of eight ministries to replace the Petrine colleges abolished by Catherine was the only effectual consequence of the extensive reformist plans of the Private Committee. Ministries of the army, the navy, foreign affairs, home affairs, justice, finance, commerce and public instruction were instituted. A Committee of Ministers was set up. As distinct from the practice under the colleges, the ministers had complete personal charge of affairs in the ministries, reporting on all important matters to the tsar. The establishment of ministries made for further centralization of tsarist Russia's state machine. The Senate was reorganized and made the supreme judicial body of the empire; it was to be the custodian of the laws and guardian of general "peace and order." All important state matters were submitted for consideration to the State Council, established in 1810. On the whole this system of administration remained in force throughout the 19th century.

Among the more significant of the reforms introduced in the early years of Alexander's reign was the establishment of a new educational system which provided for three types of schools: the gymnasium (with four grades), the district school (with two grades) and the parish school (with one grade). The same Regulations of 1804 granted self-government to the universities: the rector and deans were elected by the general meeting of professors and the universities were allowed to confer degrees, etc.

Numerous deviations from the regulations soon took place, however. Since the nobles were reluctant to enroll their sons in the gymnasia, the government founded for them the Tsarskoye Selo and Richelieu lyceums outside the general school system.

At the beginning of the 19th century there were only two universities: in Moscow and Dorpat. In 1805 universities were founded in Kharkov and Kazan. The Central Pedagogical Institute in St. Petersburg was reorganized into a university in 1819.

The Ministry of Public Instruction, Education of Youth and Diffusion of Science was instituted to supervise educational activities. The ministry, however, was more concerned with the political bonafides of the teachers and pupils, than with education as such.

In 1804 censorship of manuscripts before publication was introduced.

Thus, Alexander, in his domestic policy, did nothing whatsoever to break resolutely with the policy of serfdom which his predecessors had pursued.

**The War Against Napoleon (1805-1807).** Alexander prosecuted his foreign policy at a time when the French revolutionary wars had been superseded by the Napoleonic wars of conquest.

Lenin stressed the fact that the wars waged by France during the period of the Napoleonic empire had changed in character, being no longer defensive revolutionary wars but predatory campaigns of conquest. "It was not in 1792-1793, but many years later, *after* the victory of reaction within the country, that the counter-revolutionary dictatorship of Napoleon transformed the wars on France's part from defensive wars into wars of conquest." \*

Another important feature of the Napoleonic wars was the growing antagonism between bourgeois France and England over the division of markets. Russian tsarism was interested in trade with England and took her side. Upon ascending the throne Alexander immediately restored friendly relations with England, released the British ships which had been detained in Russian ports and permitted the import of British goods. In 1801 Russia and England signed a convention of amity. Alexander nevertheless did not break off relations with Napoleon. As Russia's ally England was compelled to make peace with Napoleon (in 1802, at Amiens). The Treaty of Amiens was not long-lived, for Russia and England had concluded a military pact earlier, in March 1801. A new coalition headed by England and including Russia, Austria and Sweden was organized against France. England promised to subsidize her allies and demanded that they immediately begin hostilities. The object of this anti-French coalition was not only to check Napoleon's conquests but also to restore the Bourbons to the French throne.

In August 1805 a Russian army under Kutuzov was sent to aid Austria. The entry of the Russian troops into Europe frustrated Napoleon's plans for a forced crossing of the channel and saved England from invasion by a Napoleonic army of 150,000 standing ready for that purpose.

Kutuzov effected a forced march under difficult conditions to the Bavarian town of Braunau, upon reaching which he learned that the main forces of the allied Austrian troops under General Mack had capitulated at the fortress of Ulm. Kutuzov had one-fifth of Napoleon's numerical strength, and he had no option but to retreat. Napoleon ordered his ablest generals to cut off Kutuzov's retreat. Bagration received orders from Kutuzov to hold up Murat's corps which was pursuing the Russian army. The Austrian troops moving along in front betrayed their allies and entered into negotiations with Murat. Bagration's little force of 6,000 was surrounded by the French troops numbering 30,000. A battle between the Russian and the French took

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\* Lenin, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. II, p. 116, Moscow 1947.

place at Schöngraben and lasted all day and half the night. During the night fighting Bagra-tion succeeded in breaking through the enemy's circle. All the survivors of the Schöngraben battle received arm-bands with the inscription: "One versus five," indicating the fivefold superiority of the French over the Russians.

The retreat of the Russian troops, by tiring out the enemy, effected a change in the scales. By the middle of November Kutuzov had brought over 86,000 men into action at Olmütz and Napoleon had concentrated 90,000 here. The Russian army was poorly supplied and worn out with fatigue. Alexander I, who had meanwhile arrived at the army inspired with dreams of military glory and of defeating Napoleon, would not hear of giving the men a rest. The Austrian Emperor Francis I and his generals also insisted on giving general battle immediately. The war council, despite Kutuzov's opposition, decided in favour of a pitched battle. The Russo-Austrian armies occupied positions on a large hilly plateau near the village of Austerlitz (Bohemia). On a misty autumn morning of December 2 (new style), 1805 three columns of Russian troops attempted to overcome the right flank of the French, but this ended in failure, since the allied troops were spread out. The French inflicted a heavy blow on the scattered allied forces at Austerlitz. The Russian soldiers fought heroically but were unable to withstand the furious onslaughts of a numerically stronger foe. Napoleon paid tribute to the heroism of the Russian soldiers. "At Austerlitz," he said, "the Russians displayed greater valour than in any other battle against me."

The defeat at Austerlitz was due to the interference of the Austrian and Russian emperors in the command of military operations. The defeat induced Austria to conclude peace with France. Napoleon took Vienna and began preparations for continuing the war in Europe, first and foremost against Prussia.

In the autumn of 1806 Alexander sent troops to the aid of his ally Prussia. Napoleon surrounded the Prussians in a lightning attack at Jena and routed them. Berlin surrendered to the French without battle and remained in their hands for two years, from 1806 to 1808. Napoleon concentrated forces on the Vistula, from where he threatened to launch an offensive against Russia. In January 1807 he entered Warsaw. In the Battle of Preußisch Eylau (in East Prussia) a month later, the Russian army displayed its prowess. Napoleon did not win a victory here and began to prepare for a decisive battle. The Battle of Friedland in the summer of 1807, during which the Russian army lost almost one-fourth of its men, decided the outcome of the entire campaign.

By the Treaty of Tilsit signed in June 1807 Russia had to recognize all Napoleon's conquests and Napoleon himself as emperor, and conclude a defensive and offensive alliance with him. Most important

of all, however, she had to join the continental blockade, i.e., the economic war against England.

By isolating England from the rest of Europe Napoleon hoped to destroy her commercial supremacy. In 1806 he proclaimed the continental system, under which all countries dependent on the Napoleonic empire were prohibited from trading with England. Russia also undertook to stop the export of corn to England and the import of British goods. The blockade, however, was a serious economic blow to Russia. It ruined many Russian landlords. The price of corn fell. Trade dropped. The blockade led to a financial crisis in the country.

The Russian nobility were opposed to the Treaty of Tilsit. Alexander's closest friends—Kochubey, Czartoryski and Novosiltsev—resigned. Mikhail Speransky, who was regarded as a partisan of the pro-French faction, became the tsar's intimate adviser.

**M. M. Speransky (1772-1839).** Besides their discontent with the continental blockade the landlords were strongly opposed to the plans for state reforms, whose most dangerous exponent was held to be Speransky.

Speransky, the son of a village priest, was educated at the ecclesiastical seminary in St. Petersburg. He advanced rapidly from the position of clerk in the office of the procurator-general to that of State Secretary. After the Treaty of Tilsit he became Alexander's first adviser. In 1809 Speransky completed a draft for reforms entitled *Codification of State Laws*. This was an extensive project of reforms aiming to adapt the feudal monarchy to the rising bourgeois relations. Speransky advocated protection for "science, commerce and industry." He did not put forward an open demand for emancipation but he wanted the peasants to be granted "personal freedom." "There is not a single case in history of an enlightened and commercial nation long remaining in slavery," he declared in his draft.

Speransky proposed the convention of a State Duma consisting of property owners regardless of what estate they belonged to. In every *volost* the owners of real estate were to elect a *volost* дума. These in turn were to elect deputies to the *okrug* думas, thence to the gubernia думas, and the latter were to elect deputies to the State Duma. The elections were thus to pass through four stages. No law was to be passed without the approval of the State Duma and the State Council. Executive power was to be placed in the hands of ministers responsible to the Duma. Speransky's draft was progressive for those days.

The majority of the landlords were incensed by Speransky's projects. They called him a "villain," a "revolutionary" and a "Cromwell." The uproar among the nobility was so great that Alexander was forced into a resolute rejection of all plans for constitutional reform. All he did was to establish in 1810 a State Council of members appointed by the emperor. This was an advisory body to the tsar and

such it remained until 1906. The number of ministers was increased to 11 by the establishment of ministries of the Police, Communications and State Control.

The nobility in opposition emphatically demanded withdrawal from the blockade and Speransky's resignation. The most forceful exponent of the temper of the serf-owning landlords was N. M. Karamzin, the well-known historian, whose *Notes on Old and New Russia* formulated their chief demands. Instead of limiting the autocracy Karamzin proposed the selection of 50 "good" governors who were to be entrusted with the administration of the state. The reactionary opposition from among the nobility wanted serfdom to remain inviolable, trade resumed with England, the Treaty of Tilsit repudiated, a war against Napoleon, and the dismissal of "the dangerous reformer" Speransky.

**The Russo-Swedish War of 1808-1809 and the Annexation of Finland.** The Treaty of Tilsit altered international relations in Europe. Napoleon strove to utilize Russia in the interests of his policy of conquest, primarily in his struggle against England. At his insistence Russia broke off diplomatic relations with England. He also urged Russia into a war against Sweden, who had refused to join the continental system and had concluded an alliance with England. The war with Sweden was to give Alexander the right to annex Finland. Russia had important strategic reasons for contesting Finland: the Finnish border ran close to St. Petersburg, the Russian capital, which had to be safeguarded against attack from the north. In February 1808 Russian troops crossed the frontier, occupying the Aland Islands in March and the Island of Hogland in April. By the end of 1808 the war shifted to Swedish territory when the Russian troops launched an offensive under difficult winter conditions. Barclay de Tolly's detachment made its famous march from Vaasa across the frozen Gulf of Bothnia to Sweden. The Russian troops heroically surmounted the difficulties of the march over hummocky ice and through knee-deep snow and reached the Swedish coast.

On March 16, 1809, during the height of the offensive against Sweden, Alexander convened the Finnish Diet in the town of Borga. The previous day Finnish autonomy had been recognized by official enactment. The tsar promised the Diet that he would "preserve the Constitution of Finland inviolable and unalterable." Finland was proclaimed a Russian province.

While the Diet sat in session Russia and Sweden started peace negotiations which resulted in a treaty signed at Fredrikshamn on September 5, 1809. Sweden ceded to Russia the whole of Finland, which had been conquered by Russian troops. The king of Sweden joined the continental blockade.



**Napoleon's Preparations for the Invasion of Russia.** Napoleon's government, as Stalin said, was a "bourgeois government which stifled the French revolution and preserved only those results of the revolution which were of benefit to the big bourgeoisie."

Napoleon waged his wars of aggrandizement in Europe and beyond it in the interests of France's big bourgeoisie, who were competing with English capital. By force of arms he compelled all the European countries he had conquered to join the continental blockade against England. Notwithstanding the Tilsit peace treaty, Napoleon made intensive preparations for a war of conquest against Russia, to which he was provoked by several motives. In the first place he was displeased with Russia's frequent violations of the continental blockade; he was disturbed by the massing of tsarist troops on the western border, constituting a threat to Poland; finally, he was troubled by Russia's policy toward Prussia, a policy which hindered him from becoming master of the Rhine Confederation. The Rhine Confederation of 16 German states had been created by Napoleon in June 1806 and was a French protectorate.

In making his preparations for war Napoleon collected information about Russia, studied her economy, sent spies into the country and even counterfeited Russian paper currency. At the same time he established a springboard for his offensive against Russia in Poland. Under the terms of the Treaty of Tilsit, Napoleon in 1807 created a new Polish state called the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, out of the Polish provinces which Prussia had acquired as a result of the partitions. Subsequently Austrian Galicia was annexed to this new state. To make sure of the support of the Polish gentry Napoleon promised to restore Poland's old borders, i.e., to give her Lithuania, Byelorussia and part of the Ukraine. Acting on Napoleon's advice Poland in 1807 abolished serfdom. The peasants received their personal freedom, but the land remained the property of the Polish landlords.

The tsarist government was extremely disturbed by the situation in Poland. Alexander demanded that Napoleon abstain from supporting and regenerating the Polish state, and that he agree to Russia's seizure of the Dardanelles and Constantinople. Napoleon rejected these demands. Relations between the allies became strained.

Meanwhile complications were setting in in Europe. In Spain the national war for liberation against the French usurpers was gathering momentum, and the Spaniards had defeated the French in a series of major engagements. Austria had begun to arm herself and sought an alliance with Russia. Prussia began to reorganize her army. Another meeting between Napoleon and Alexander took place at Erfurt in the autumn of 1808, at which Napoleon, in order to keep Russia on his side, consented to her annexing Moldavia and Walachia. Na-

napoleon continued to make conquests despite stiffening resistance in Europe. In 1810 he annexed to his empire Holland, the Hanse towns and the Duchy of Oldenburg, which was ruled by a relative of Alexander. The Russian emperor registered a strong protest. Napoleon demonstratively refused to accept the Russian note of protest.

Russia's internal situation was another factor that caused Alexander to break with Napoleon. The continental blockade threatened the country with economic ruin. Before he had broken with Napoleon, Alexander launched what was virtually a tariff war against him by raising the duties on French goods. British cargoes arrived in Russia under neutral flags.

Meanwhile the higher nobility had had its way with Speransky, whom everyone regarded as an advocate of the alliance with Napoleon. The State Secretary was removed from office, accused of treason and exiled, first to Nizhni Novgorod and later to Perm.

**War with Turkey (1806-1812).** Russia's preparations for a war with France hastened the end of hostilities against Turkey, which had been in progress since 1806. The Turks tried to take advantage of the defeats of the Russian army on the battlefields of Europe to drive the Russian troops out of Western Transcaucasia and re-establish their domination on the Black Sea. Turkey was supported by France. Russia's efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement failed. Although the main forces of the Russian army were engaged in Europe, Russian troops in November 1806 invaded the Danube principalities which were under Turkish rule and soon occupied all of Bessarabia, Moldavia and Walachia. Their advance was checked only at the Danube, where there were strong Turkish fortresses.

The Russian command decided to launch an offensive against the Turks from Transcaucasia. While both sides were preparing for large-scale offensive operations the news of the signing of the Treaty of Tilsit arrived. Napoleon acted as mediator between Russia and Turkey to put an end to hostilities. During the Erfurt meeting Alexander had secured Napoleon's consent to the annexation of the Danube principalities by Russia, to the proclamation of Serbian independence and the recognition of a Russian protectorate over Georgia. Turkey refused to negotiate peace under those terms. In March 1809 hostilities between Turkey and Russia were resumed. Russian troops laid siege to a number of Turkish fortresses, gained a firm hold on the right bank of the Danube and reached the foothills of the Balkans. In September 1810 they took Rustchuk, and at the end of 1811 Akhalakaki, a large Turkish fortress in Transcaucasia. These defeats compelled the Turks to enter into negotiations.

By the Treaty of Bucharest, concluded on May 8, 1812, Turkey ceded to Russia Bessarabia including the fortresses of Khotin, Bender,

Akkerman and Ismail. Russia returned Poti and Akhalkalaki to Turkey.

The Treaty of Bucharest was a great victory for Russia. She was now free to transfer her army from the Danube to fight Napoleon.

## 26. THE PATRIOTIC WAR OF 1812

**Napoleon's Invasion of Russia.** Besides the main forces of his own army Napoleon hurled against Russia the armies of all the conquered countries of Europe.

In May 1812 Napoleon set out in state from Dresden to join the *Grande Armée* which was moving toward the Niemen River.

On the morning of June 12 (24), 1812, Napoleon invaded Russia without a declaration of war. Four columns of troops in an endless stream began the passage of the Niemen. Napoleon was among the first to cross the river, and together with the old guard he hastened to a nearby woods in expectation of the opening encounter with the Russian troops. But he found himself amidst deserted fields and vast, silent forests. There was not a single dwelling or human being in sight. The Russian troops had withdrawn.

The Russian army numbered 180,000 men in all. An army under Barclay de Tolly lay grouped about the border, on the Niemen; another, under Bagration, was in Southern Lithuania, and the third, a reserve force, under Tormasov, was stationed in Volhynia. Taking into account the movements of the scattered Russian armies Napoleon decided to attack and defeat them piecemeal. His army of over 500,000 was overwhelmingly superior to the Russian in numbers.

The deficiencies of the Russian army, inherent in the general weaknesses of feudal Russia, were the incompetence of a considerable section of the military command, a brutal system of discipline, and pilfering and peculation on the part of army officials and commissariat officers at the expense of the soldiers.

But Napoleon's army no longer resembled the French army of twenty years before. It was no longer a French army but a huge all-European army made up of forcibly recruited men of different nationalities speaking different languages and fighting for the alien objectives of a French conqueror. The Germans, Italians, Swiss, Croats and, above all, the Spaniards hated Napoleon as the enslaver of their countries. The soldiers were out for loot, and they started pillaging as soon as they set foot on Russian soil.

When Napoleon's army of half a million men invaded Russia Barclay decided to retreat without accepting battle and to join Bagration's army, which had already set out to meet him. From Vilno Barclay retired to an entrenched camp at the hamlet of Drisa on the Dvina. This camp had been built by General Fulle, an incompetent foreigner,

with the approval of Emperor Alexander, who himself was poorly versed in military matters. It was situated between two highways, presumably to check Napoleon if he marched either on St. Petersburg or Moscow. Actually its location made it a trap for the Russian army, which could easily be encircled there. Barclay therefore abandoned Drisa and withdrew to Vitebsk via Polotsk, leaving the protection of the St. Petersburg road to a detached corps under Wittgenstein, who successfully warded off Marshal Oudinot's onslaught.

Bagration, hotly followed by Marshal Davout with an army of 50,000 and Napoleon's brother Jerome with an army of 60,000, was in extremely difficult straits. Davout and Jerome tried to surround Bagration's little army and cut off his retreat, but he managed to elude the French pincers. His retreat was covered by a cavalry detachment under the command of Platov. Davout occupied Minsk and then proceeded to the Berezina River, again hoping to cut off Bagration. Meanwhile Bagration was withdrawing his forces along defiles in the marshes. Cut off from the main forces and thrust far to the south, Bagration's army crossed the Berezina and the Dnieper and again evaded encirclement. After waiting in vain for Bagration at Vitebsk Barclay put out a rearguard and quietly withdrew from camp with lights extinguished.

Retreating under extremely difficult conditions, harassed by the enemy, suffering from the torrid heat, lack of drinking water, hunger and disease which took heavy toll on account of the absence of any kind of medical aid, the two Russian armies finally succeeded in making junction at Smolensk. Napoleon reached Smolensk in August and ordered it to be taken by storm. He bombarded Smolensk for thirteen hours; the whole town was in flames. Barclay ordered the powder magazines to be blown up and then abandoned the burning city. The residents set fire to their homes and property in order not to leave anything to the enemy, and evacuated the town together with the army. The Russian troops put up a spirited fight at Smolensk. However, Barclay realized that the numerical superiority of the French threatened him with rout and refused to let himself be drawn into the pitched battle which Napoleon was so set on.

Barclay had the strength of will and firmness to carry out methodically his plan of retreat, which was the only means of saving the army from a smashing defeat. As Marx pointed out, the Russian plan of retreat was no longer a matter of free choice but of stern necessity.

The terror-stricken nobility, however, was strongly opposed to the retreat. Barclay de Tolly was accused of cowardice and even treachery. The relations between Barclay and Bagration, the two commanders, grew more and more strained. Bagration averred that "Barclay is leading the guests straight on to Moscow." A disciple of Suvorov and a man of reckless courage, Bagration was thirsting for battle. He claimed

that the surrender of Smolensk had been too hasty, and demanded a change of command.

At the demand of the army and the nobility, Alexander appointed 67-year-old Field Marshal Kutuzov commander-in-chief.

Mikhail Illarionovich Kutuzov, a man of great courage, was Suvorov's favourite pupil and one of Russia's most talented soldiers. He came from old noble stock. At 29 a Turkish bullet deprived him of an eye in a battle in the Crimea. He was twice seriously wounded, but both times returned to the ranks. He enjoyed the love and esteem of his men. Suvorov, who was a great admirer of Kutuzov's mind and talents, said of him: "He's astute! Clever, clever! Nobody can trick him!"

In all his battles Kutuzov displayed exceptionally able and resourceful leadership, personal bravery and remarkable stratagem. Like his teacher Suvorov, Kutuzov hated martinetism and Draconian discipline. He loved the Russian soldier of whose valour and heroism he had a very high opinion.

Kutuzov was well-educated and knew many foreign languages. He kept abreast of Russian and foreign literature, particularly of a military nature. In 1795 he was appointed director of the Higher Army School, where he lectured on the history of warfare and on tactics.

Kutuzov cordially detested the spirit of servility, flattery and venality that reigned at the tsarist court. Nor was he himself liked at the court. Tsar Alexander also disliked Kutuzov, particularly after the Battle of Austerlitz, which he lost after disregarding Kutuzov's warning.

When he appointed Kutuzov commander-in-chief in 1812 the tsar told his retinue: "The public desired his appointment, so I have appointed him. But personally I wash my hands of him."

On learning of Kutuzov's appointment as commander-in-chief Napoleon said, "The sly fox of the North!" When this was reported to Kutuzov, he replied, "I shall try to prove to the great soldier that he is right."

**The People's War.** The farther Napoleon's army advanced into the interior the worse its position became. The *Grande Armée* grew manifestly weaker as it spread over the vast territory of Russia leaving garrisons behind it in the towns; communications became precarious; the supply trains lagged behind, and there were breakdowns in the supply of food and fodder. Everywhere they met a hostile population. The Lithuanian and Byelorussian peasants were the first to take up arms against the invaders. Napoleon occupied all of Lithuania and Byelorussia and set up a government of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania composed of landlords. In a speech to the nobles in Mogilev Marshal Davout assured them that the "peasants will remain, as heretofore, in subjection to their landlords." Now the peasants had to bear



M. I. Kutuzov. *From a portrait by Orlovsky*

not only persecution and oppression by their landlords but the additional affliction of national humiliation, robbery, pillage, requisitions and endless imposts levied by the French invaders.

The war against Napoleon instantly assumed the character of a people's war. "This is not an ordinary war but a people's war," wrote Bagration. The population hunted out French scouts and spies, they refused to furnish supplies for the invading army, and, when the French approached, set fire to their homes and corn and went into the forests to wage guerilla warfare. The regular troops displayed wonderful feats of heroism. A Bashkir division, Kalmuck soldiers, Tatars and men of other nationalities fought bravely side by side with the Russians, Ukrainians and Byelorussians.

The people's war in Russia, which inflicted heavy losses on Napoleon's army, incensed the conqueror, who had never met that kind of opposition anywhere in Europe. On September 23, 1812, he sent a protest to the Russian command against the "barbaric and unusual" methods of warfare and proposed "cessation" of the war by the people.

On another occasion he presented the following demand through General Lauriston: "Military operations should conform to the established rules of warfare," to which Kutuzov replied: "The people liken this war to a Tatar invasion and, consequently, consider all means to rid themselves of the enemy to be not only not reprehensible but praiseworthy and sacred."

**The Battle of Borodino.** Kutuzov was well aware of the strength of the enemy, and though he approved of Barclay de Tolly's tactics, he shared Bagration's opinion regarding the need for substantially strengthening the rearguard. Kutuzov appointed Konovitsyn to head the rearguard. Rearguard actions between August 27 and September 5 checked the French advance. Kutuzov declared that the enemy could be overcome only with the aid of time and space. He argued that Moscow was not the whole of Russia and that it might have to be surrendered to save Russia.

Napoleon wanted at all costs to force Kutuzov into fighting a decisive battle. He followed hot upon the heels of the Russians, waging incessant action against the rearguard. On the night of August 23 Napoleon drew up to the Russian redoubt at the village of Shevardino. A small number of men defended the Shevardino redoubt with supreme heroism. They beat off the violent attacks of the French infantry and cavalry from four in the afternoon until dark, and only then did they retreat to the main positions. After the Battle of Shevardino a pitched battle became both possible and inevitable. At dawn on August 26 (September 8) the Russian and French armies finally met near the village of Borodino, 90 kilometres from Moscow.

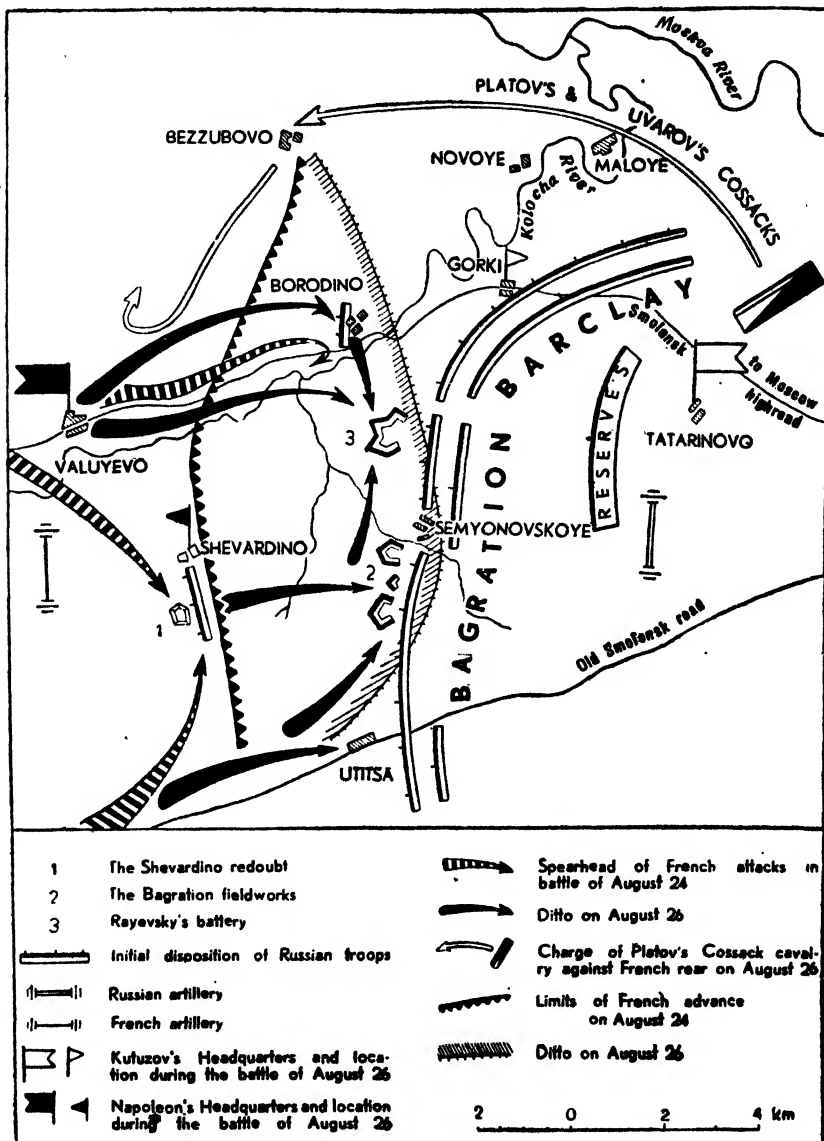
Barclay de Tolly, with 76,000 men including reserves, held the right flank and the centre of the Russian army.

Bagration, Suvorov's favourite and Kutuzov's friend, was on the left flank. Peter Ivanovich Bagration, a Georgian by extraction, began military service at 17 as sergeant in a rifle regiment in the Caucasus. One of Suvorov's most able pupils, he possessed boundless courage, and under his leadership the Russian soldiers worked wonders in the most dangerous operations. Napoleon, who held the opinion that "Bagration is the best general in the Russian army," sent his most experienced marshals against him.

Napoleon planned to deal his main blow at the "Bagration flèches," a group of Russian field works in front of the village of Semyonovskaya. The "Bagration flèches" being rather poorly constructed, Napoleon counted on an easy capture, particularly since Bagration had a small army of little more than 35,000. In all there were about 112,000 Russian regular troops at Borodino, besides 7,000 Cossacks and a 10,000 popular levy from Moscow and Smolensk.

When Napoleon reached Borodino he had an army of only 130,000 men and 587 guns.

# THE DECLINE OF SERFDOM AND THE BIRTH OF CAPITALISM



Borodino, August 24 and 26, 1812



The battle opened with an attack on the village of Borodino, which was captured by the French. A fierce battle raged around the "Bagration flèches," which were furiously defended. The flèches changed hands several times and were strewn with dead men and horses. A French general who took part in this engagement relates that the French charged the "Bagration flèches" eight times and were thrown back each time, leaving piles of corpses at the approaches. "Bagration's troops, reinforced constantly by new arrivals, advanced with wonderful valour over the bodies of the fallen to regain the lost positions. Before our eyes the Russian columns moved at the command of their leaders in serried ranks of glittering steel and fire. On open terrain they suffered terrible losses from our case shot and our cavalry and infantry charges. But these brave warriors, making a supreme exertion, still went on attacking."

At a critical moment, while over 400 French guns were pounding away at the left wing of the Russian front, Kutuzov sent reinforcements to Bagration. The Russians had about 300 guns, which made a total of some 700 thundering away within an area of a single square kilometre. The bravery of the Russian artillerymen amazed the French. One of the participants in the battle states in his memoirs: "The Russian gunners were faithful to their duty. They took redoubts, they protected the guns with their bodies and did not surrender them. Often a gunner wounded in one hand would continue firing with the other." The sky was hidden by a dark pall of powder smoke lightened up by red flashes of grenades. The village of Semyonovskaya had been set on fire from all sides and was blazing. Napoleon threw fresh reserves into battle. Bagration counter attacked. A participant in the fighting relates: "The charge was horrible. . . . A frightful carnage ensued in which superhuman bravery was displayed on both sides. . . . Although the enemy had superior numbers the Russians showed up well until an accident changed the entire situation."

During this engagement Bagration was mortally wounded. He made an effort to get up but dropped down and the soldiers carried their heroic commander off the battlefield. He fought back excruciating pain as he gave his last orders. His last words before losing consciousness were: "How are my men?" The answer was, "Sticking fast."

The brave Dokhturov took over command. He succeeded in checking the confusion that had broken out among the troops when they heard that Bagration had been mortally wounded. "Die if we must, but not one step back!" he commanded. Nonetheless the left flank of the Russian front was borne down, and the French took the "Bagration flèches."

Napoleon then turned his guns on Rayevsky's battery in the centre. Almost all the defenders of the battery perished in the fierce

fighting which ensued. Rayevsky's battery was taken. Still the Russian army continued to stand its ground.

In his *Borodino* the great Russian poet Lermontov described the tenseness of the battle and the heroism of the Russian soldiers:

*That day the foeman learned aright  
The way we Russian soldiers fight—  
Fierce hand to hand,  
Horses and men together laid,  
And still the thundering cannonade;  
Our breasts were trembling, as it made  
Tremble the land.  
Then darkness fell in hill and plain;  
Yet we were game to fight again. . . .*

In the evening Napoleon ordered his troops to withdraw from the field of battle. The Russian army, though it sustained heavy casualties, withdrew from Borodino to Moscow in perfect order. In the Battle of Borodino the Russian nation once more demonstrated to the world the heroism and self-sacrifice of which it was capable when the defence of its country and national independence were at stake. In an appraisal of this great battle Napoleon admitted just before his death: "Of all the battles I ever fought the most terrible was that of Moscow. The French showed themselves worthy of victory; the Russians won the right to be invincible."

**The Fire of Moscow.** Kutuzov retreated from Borodino to Mozhaisk and thence to Moscow. On September 1, 1812, he called a council of war in the village of Fili, near Moscow, at which the question was discussed as to whether the Russian army should accept battle again or retreat from Moscow. The generals were in favour of giving battle again. Kutuzov cut the conference short and announced his command for a retreat. "The loss of Moscow does not mean the loss of Russia," said Kutuzov.

Early in the morning of September 2 (14) the Russian army marched through Moscow in a continuous stream. Muscovites left the city together with the army; they departed with their possessions, carrying bundles and sacks, on foot and in carriages, jamming all the roads. When Murat's cavalry entered Moscow by way of the long and narrow Arbat Street the city was silent and deserted. There remained only the foreigners and the inhabitants who had not had time to leave.

That night fires broke out in Moscow. The wind scattered the sparks over the wooden buildings, which flared up one after another. Dwellings, warehouses, shops and the stalls on Red Square burned down. The French soldiers and marauders rushed into the buildings and



The French in Moscow. Execution of incendiaries.

*From a drawing by Klein, 1814*

pillaged whatever the flames had not consumed. The fire lasted six days, during which night could not be distinguished from day. The people themselves made no effort to fight the fires. "Let everything perish so long as it does not go to the enemy," they said, as they deserted the city.

**The Defeat of Napoleon.** Napoleon's army, worn out by its long and arduous march, hungry, badly clothed and demoralized, remained in burning Moscow. Napoleon made peace overtures. He wanted the peace treaty to be signed in Moscow in order to save his prestige in Europe.

He made several peace proposals to Alexander. In a personal letter to the tsar sent through Yakovlev (the father of Herzen), he asked Alexander to restore their friendship. Alexander did not reply to any of the peace offers. Meanwhile winter was approaching. There were no provisions in Moscow, but there was still plenty of wine in the cellars, and the French soldiers indulged in drunken orgies. They turned into drunken marauders. Robbery and murder were rife.

Kutuzov retreated from Moscow along the Ryazan road and then swerved sharply toward Tarutino. This remarkable flanking movement was the beginning of an offensive against Napoleon's army and its

encirclement from the south. Only now did Napoleon fathom Kutuzov's tactics. He decided to abandon Moscow at once.

Napoleon began his retreat from Moscow at 7 o'clock in the morning of October 6 (18). At his orders an attempt was made to blow up the Kremlin. One of the towers and a section of the Kremlin wall were destroyed. The destruction was not as great as Napoleon had intended because rain wet the fuses of the mines that had been planted.

Napoleon decided to break through to the Ukraine via Kaluga, where the Russian army had food stores. But Kutuzov outflanked him and blocked his path.

A decisive action was fought at Maloyaroslavets, which changed hands many times and where the French were thoroughly worsted. Napoleon turned off on the Smolensk road. The French army passed through devastated towns and villages, burning everything that still remained intact. Famine assumed catastrophic proportions in the army. There was nothing to eat but horse flesh. The Smolensk highroad all along its length was strewn with the bodies of men and horses.

The peasants waged guerilla warfare and hampered the retreat of the French by numerous sudden attacks.



Peasant partisans in the Sychev uyezd. *From an old drawing*

One of the organizers of the guerilla detachments was Lieutenant Colonel Denis Davydov. A Hussar and poet, Denis Davydov was the son of a cavalry officer. Since early childhood he had dreamed of military glory. As a boy of nine he had attracted the attention of Suvorov, who foretold a brilliant military future for him. After that the great Suvorov was Davydov's cherished ideal. At the beginning of the war of 1812, when the Russian army was retreating to Moscow, Davydov, then a lieutenant colonel in the Akhter Hussar Regiment, told Bagration of his plan for guerilla warfare behind the enemy's lines with the active support of the mass of the people. Kutuzov immediately saw the advantages of Davydov's plan and approved it. He suggested that Davydov organize a small detachment of 50 Hussars and 150 Cossacks as an experiment. Soon after, this detachment went into action south of Gzhatsk. Davydov established contact with the peasant volunteer detachments, with whose support he began effective operations in the French rear. His detachment grew quickly. Kutuzov summoned Davydov to him and thanked him for his excellent service. Embracing Davydov, Kutuzov said, "Your successful experiments have shown me the value of guerilla warfare, which has inflicted, is inflicting and will continue to inflict much damage on the enemy."

Subsequently Davydov summed up his rich experiences in a book entitled *Experience in the Theory of Guerilla Action*. Describing "real guerilla warfare," Davydov said that it "covers and cuts off the entire area of the opposing army from its rear to its natural base; by striking at the most vulnerable points, it tears up the roots of the enemy's existence, exposes him to the blows of our own army, deprives him of food supplies and ammunition, and bars the enemy's retreat. This is guerilla warfare in the full sense of the word." Davydov prophesied a big role for guerilla action in future wars of liberation waged by the Russian people.

The guerillas attacked and made sudden raids on warehouses and food trains all along the French line, as well as on messengers carrying documents. Soldiers and peasants were frequently the organizers of guerilla detachments. Yermolai Chetvertakov, a soldier in a dragoon detachment, who escaped from French captivity, mustered a guerilla detachment in the villages around Gzhatsk. A guerilla officer named Figner more than once made his way into Napoleon's camp disguised as a French army man. A guerilla named Seslavina once captured a French reconnaissance officer and brought him back across his saddle.

Gerasim Kurin formed a detachment of peasants and armed it with weapons captured from the French. Vasilisa Kozhina, the wife of a village elder of Smolensk Region, killed many marauding soldiers of Napoleon's army with pitchfork and scythe.

### The Berezina and the Destruction of the "Grande Armée."

After tremendous hardships the *Grande Armée* finally reached Smolensk where it hoped to find food and rest. But like Moscow Smolensk had been burned down. Horses perished for lack of fodder. The last provisions were stolen by hungry soldiers who broke into the stores. The French army was by now completely out of hand. To crown all, severe frosts had set in. The soldiers used carriages, carts, and furniture left in the houses to build bonfires on the squares. No fewer than 30,000 soldiers were ill. But it was not the "Russian frosts" that caused the defeat of the *Grande Armée*. In a work entitled *Did the Frosts Destroy the French Army in 1812?* Denis Davydov says the weather was mild during Napoleon's retreat. His army was already at Yelnya when the first snow fell. The temperature did not drop below minus twelve degrees, and the frost lasted no more than three or five days. "Is it possible," wrote Davydov, "that an army of 150,000 could lose 65,000 men because of frosts that lasted from three to five days? The far more severe cold of 1795 in Holland, in 1807 during the Eylau campaign, which held about two months in succession, and in 1808 in Spain, which held throughout the winter campaign in the mountains of Castile, touched the surface, so to speak, of the French army, but did not penetrate it." It was the spirit of the Russian nation, the magnificent heroism and staunchness of the Russian army, supported by the



The flight of French from Russia. From a drawing by Klein, 1814

whole nation, which encompassed Napoleon's defeat in the Great Patriotic War.

With great difficulty Napoleon reached the Berezina River, which he had to cross. Warding off the attacks of the Russian troops, Napoleon began the passage with the wreck of his "grand" army. The crossing proceeded under a hail of cannon balls and bullets. Bridges crashed into the river together with the men. Many were crushed by horses; others were struck down by the bullets and balls or drowned during the crossing. No less than 10,000 Frenchmen lost their lives at the Berezina. About 60,000 crossed the river, but their ranks continued to thin. At the end of December there were barely 30,000 survivors of the "grand" army. Napoleon abandoned his defeated army and left for Paris.

The War of 1812 was a righteous war, a patriotic war, and, as such, occupies a place of great importance in Russian history. It was a war that asserted the national independence of Russia and of the Russian people. The heroism of the soldiers, the operations of the guerillas and the peasants, and the unity of the entire Russian people in fighting the foreign invaders, all helped Russia to defeat Napoleon, one of the most powerful conquerors in history.

## 27. TSARISM AT THE HELM OF EUROPEAN REACTION

**The European Campaign of Alexander I.** In January 1813 the Russian army, pursuing Napoleon's army, entered Poland and Prussia. The peoples of Europe rose up against Napoleon the conqueror in a struggle for national liberation. The national-liberation movement of the European peoples subjugated by Napoleon contributed to the military successes of the coalition fighting him. But the feudal monarchs utilized the war of the peoples for national liberation not to emancipate them but to restore the feudal regime in Europe.

In the autumn of 1813 Napoleon was defeated in the "Battle of the Nations" at Leipzig. The allied armies with Alexander I at their head entered Paris in March 1814. The Bourbon monarchy which the revolution had overthrown was restored in France. Napoleon was dethroned and exiled to the Island of Elba. A congress of the European monarchs was called in Vienna to divide the territories taken from France. In May 1815 the general act of the Congress of Vienna was signed, which gave Russia the greater part of the Duchy of Warsaw in "perpetuity."

While the Congress was sitting at Vienna Napoleon escaped from Elba and returned to Paris. He fought to recover the power about one hundred days before he was conclusively defeated by English and German troops at Waterloo. The allied army again occupied Paris. Napoleon was exiled to the Island of St. Helena, where he died in 1821. Louis XVIII, brother of Louis XVI who was guillotined during the revolution, ascended the throne of France.

To combat revolution in Europe three reactionary monarchs—the Austrian, Prussian and Russian—entered into what they called the Holy Alliance in 1815. The leader and inspirer of the Holy Alliance was Alexander I. After the victory over Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna tsarist Russia's influence in European affairs increased tremendously. Marx called the Holy Alliance "only a mask for the hegemony of the tsar over all the governments of Europe."

At the congresses of the Holy Alliance measures to combat the revolutionary movements in Italy, Spain and other countries of Europe were drafted under the direction of the Russian tsar. Russian tsarism became an international gendarme.

**The Arakcheyev System.** Alexander made the counter-revolutionary program of the Holy Alliance the basis of his domestic policy as well. The foremost exponent of this policy was Arakcheyev, friend and adviser to the tsar. A poorly-educated artillery officer, Arakcheyev rose to the post of Minister of War and wielded exceptional influence and power. He made and unmade governors and the highest officials. The police force was in his hands. His name was a byword for a system of administration that was utterly depraved and permeated with bribery and corruption, sycophancy, despotism and brutality. Arakcheyev was called "half-emperor." He had blanks signed by the emperor which he used as he saw fit. His treatment of the serfs was particularly savage. A permanent feature of his estate at Gruzino were casks containing pickle in which he kept switches for flogging the serfs. Women and children were made to wear spiked collars for weeks on end for the slightest misdemeanor. Even intimates of the tsar called Arakcheyev such names as "damned viper" and "savage fiend." When Paul I had made Arakcheyev a count he inscribed on his coat of arms the device: "*Bez lesti predan*" (faithful without flattery). In society these words were changed to read "*Bes, lesti predan*" (the devil, faithful to flattery). The universal hatred for Arakcheyev was excellently expressed by Pushkin in his epigram *On Arakcheyev*.

*He grinds all Russia with his heel,  
At the rack he knows how to turn the wheel,  
Governor, and Lord of the Privy Seal.  
To the Tsar—a friend, a very twin,  
Full of vengeance, full of spite,  
Brainless, heartless, honourless quite,  
Who is this "true unflattering knight"?  
A soldier he, not worth a pin.*

Arakcheyev was especially hated for the army settlements which he organized at Alexander's initiative. This was a name given to the villages and volosts of state peasants which had been turned over to the Ministry of War for the purpose of establishing a standing army. The



peasants in the army settlements were converted into permanent and hereditary soldiers. At the same time they continued to till the land. The army was thus self-supporting. The soldiers were formed into companies and battalions, lived in barrack huts, and did everything according to a strict schedule; besides reveille there were bugle and drum signals for going to the fields to work, for sitting down to meals, and going to sleep. Every day they received an assignment from their commander. If they did not do it or did it badly they were beaten with sticks and even made to run the gauntlet. Running the gauntlet was a brutal punishment: the offender was stripped to the waist, and with his hands tied to rifle butts, he was led between two rows of soldiers who beat him with ramrods. The army settlers were ruthlessly exploited. They received meagre rations of bad food. But when the tsar visited the settlements he invariably saw a platter with a fried goose and roast pig in every hut. This platter was rushed from hut to hut by the back door while the tsar made his rounds down the main street.

The lot of the soldiers' children, who were called *cantonists*, was a miserable one. They were enrolled in the army at the age of eight and given uniforms to wear. They were trained and drilled in special company schools by non-commissioned officers who brutally punished them for the slightest misdemeanor.

At the beginning of the 'twenties there were as many as 375,000 state peasants in army settlements, which were located along Russia's western border: in Novgorod gubernia and in the Ukrainian gubernias (in Chuguyev and other places).

The peasants stubbornly resisted transfer to the army settlements. Particularly large disturbances broke out among the Novgorod and Ukrainian settlers.

In 1819 a big uprising of army settlers occurred in Chuguyev, in the Ukraine, which was supported by the local peasants. The uprising spread to Taganrog and assumed large proportions. Two battalions of infantry and artillery were sent out against the rebellious Chuguyev settlers. The "mutineers" were court-martialled, Arakcheyev himself attending the trial. He ordered forty of the "ringleaders" to be given 10,000 strokes each with ramrods in the presence of their families. The condemned men and their families bore up manfully. The majority died during the flogging. Arakcheyev also condemned 29 women who had participated in the uprising to be publicly flogged. Hundreds of army settlers were exiled to penal servitude in Siberia.

When it was once suggested to Alexander I that the army settlements were unnecessary, he answered sharply: "Army settlements will continue to exist under all circumstances, even if I have to cover the entire road from St. Petersburg to Chudovo with corpses." (Chudovo, 73 kilometres from St. Petersburg, was where the zone of army settlements began.)

*Chapter VI***THE PEOPLES OF TSARIST RUSSIA AND THE COLONIAL POLICY OF TSARISM IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE 19TH CENTURY****28. TSARIST POLICY IN POLAND, THE UKRAINE, BYELORUSSIA AND THE BALTIC PROVINCES**

**The Kingdom of Poland.** By the decision of the Vienna Congress (1815) the major part of the Polish lands of the Duchy of Warsaw was ceded to Russia as the kingdom of Poland. Alexander I proclaimed himself hereditary king of Poland, and appointed a viceroy to rule in his absence. Taking into account the decisions of the Vienna Congress and anxious to consolidate his influence among the Polish gentry, Alexander granted Poland a "constitutional charter." Under the constitution of 1815 the Polish Diet could convene to discuss bills submitted by the tsar, but could not introduce bills itself. The Diet, and indeed all political activity in the country, was directed by the gentry, who enjoyed the support of the rising Polish bourgeoisie.

Capitalism was developing faster in Poland than in Russia, and the tsar had to create the requisite conditions there for the growth of capitalist industry. Thus, free trade was established between Russia and Poland in 1819. Prohibitive tariffs were imposed to protect Polish and Russian manufacturers from Prussian goods which were penetrating into Russia by way of Poland. Polish manufacturers, particularly those in the woollen and cotton goods industries, were granted various privileges. Foreign enterprises were also encouraged in Poland. A Polish bank was established in 1829. To consolidate the country's finances special commissions were instituted in Poland to collect tax arrears and new taxes were introduced. With the Russian market at their disposal, the Polish gentry and the bourgeoisie grew rich. At the same time the Polish peasants, overburdened by taxes and deprived of land, were being impoverished and ruined. They deserted the villages and became an abundant source of cheap labour. Since prices on agricultural produce were rising, the landlords strove to extend their cultivated area. They drove the peasants from their old plots and either cultivated their fields with the help of hired hands or turned them into pasture land for sheep, from which they obtained wool for sale to the mills. The landless peasants worked for the landlords as hired labourers under slave conditions. Under the double burden of national oppression by tsarism and exploitation by their own landlords the Polish peasants were in a continuous state of unrest.

As their economic position strengthened the Polish gentry and the rising bourgeoisie strove for complete political independence. They demanded that Poland's borders of 1772 be restored; *i. e.*, they sought the return of Byelorussian and Ukrainian lands. The Polish gentry also strove to rid themselves of the viceroy. The movement in Poland against Russian tsarism had the secret support of English diplomats. The sessions of the Diet revealed a growing opposition from among a considerable part of the gentry. Bills submitted by the tsarist government were rejected by the Diet. This irritated Alexander, who demanded that the Diet be made to realize that the Constitution of 1815 did not give it the right to criticize the actions of the tsarist government. The repressions and restrictions which followed merely had the effect of stirring up the movement for national liberation within the country. Secret societies having as their aim the restoration of Poland's political independence sprang up within the country.

**Lithuania and Byelorussia.** Lithuania and Byelorussia which had become a colony of Russian tsarism after the partition of Poland, were subject to the same administrative regulations as those enforced in Russia. The new gubernias and uyezds were placed under the jurisdiction of tsarist officials. The Lithuanian and Byelorussian nobility had at first hoped to preserve their independence. They had demanded that neither Russian troops nor Russian administration be allowed on the territory of Lithuania and Byelorussia. These demands were rejected. On the contrary, the tsarist government began to grant land in the new colonies to Russian nobles in order to create a bulwark there for the tsarist autocracy.

The war of 1812 seriously affected the economic position of Lithuania and Byelorussia. The population became impoverished and its number was reduced by one-third. The cultivated area was reduced by half. The peasants lost almost all their livestock.

After the war of 1812 the landlords restored their estates by means of still greater exploitation of the peasantry. In 1820 and 1821 Byelorussia experienced a terrible famine. The starving Byelorussian peasants abandoned the land and migrated to the central regions of Russia to seek employment on canal construction jobs and in the new factories.

About 70 per cent of the urban population of Byelorussia and Lithuania were Jews. The Jewish agricultural population was insignificant. In the towns the Jews engaged in trade and in the crafts.

In 1796 a law was passed in the interests of the Russian landlords and merchants, establishing a Jewish pale of settlement, by which the domicile of Jews was confined to Byelorussia and the Kiev, Podolsk, Volhynia, Ekaterinoslav and Taurida gubernias. Even here they were not admitted to all the gubernia centres.

In 1823 an order was issued to evict all Jews from the villages of Byelorussia.

Impoverished and persecuted Jewry formed national-religious organizations. The Jewish poor were totally dependent upon the Jewish bourgeoisie.

**The Baltic Provinces.** The Baltic provinces of Liflandia and Esthland contiguous with Lithuania and Byelorussia had been annexed to Russia during the Northern War. The Courland province had been incorporated into Russia under the third partition of Poland in 1795. The Baltic regions were administered by Russian governors, and economically dominated by large landlords—German barons—who were supported by tsarism.

The Baltic landlords became staunch supporters of the tsarist throne. They furnished courtiers and high officials for tsarist Russia right up to the Revolution of 1917.

Capitalism in the Baltic regions developed earlier than in the other parts of the Russian empire. The Baltic landlords readily abandoned unproductive and unprofitable serf labour for the free hire of landless labourers who became entirely dependent upon them economically. At the insistence of these landlords Alexander I issued an ukase freeing the Baltic peasants from personal serf dependence.

The peasants of Esthland were emancipated in 1816, of Courland in 1817, and of Liflandia in 1819; but all the land remained in the hands of the German barons. The Estonian and Lettish peasants were not even granted complete personal freedom, however. They were not free to seek a livelihood in the towns without the consent of the landlords. The landlords retained the right to administer justice and punishment. The Baltic peasants fell under a double yoke: that of the German landlords and of Russian tsarism.

**Finland.** After incorporation into Russia, Finland was transformed into the Grand Principality of Finland and Tsar Alexander I added to his title of Emperor of all Russia and King of Poland the title of Grand Prince of Finland.

A Committee of Central Administration consisting of 12 local inhabitants headed by a governor-general appointed by the tsar was set up to administer Finland. The governor-general wielded full administrative power. He supervised the enforcement of the laws and dispensation of justice. Finland received autonomy: she had her own court of law and her own army, and draft laws were discussed in the Diet. But the tsarist government systematically violated the constitution of Finland and restricted the economic and cultural development of the Finnish people. Industry did not begin to develop until the first quarter of the 19th century. The bulk of the population consisted of peasants who had practically no land of their own. The land remained in the hands of the Finnish and Swedish landlords. Peasants

who rented land on long-term leases were known as *torpari* and were obliged to work off their rent by tilling the landlords' fields a certain number of days. Particularly hard was the lot of the Karelian peasants, who carried on a primitive agriculture on stony plots wrested from forest clearings. They also engaged in hunting and fishing. The dual yoke imposed by tsarism and by the Finnish and Swedish landlords not infrequently led to peasant uprisings, which were put down by the joint efforts of the tsarist government and the landlords.

**The Ukraine.** The colonization of the Ukrainian steppes which had begun in the 18th century was continued in the first half of the 19th century. The Ukraine was rapidly becoming the granary of Europe as well as of Russia. From five to six times more grain and agricultural raw materials were now being exported to England from the Ukraine than in the middle of the 18th century. The growing urban population in Russia and the Ukraine likewise increased the demand for Ukrainian corn. The price of land was high and the landlords strove to secure for themselves gratuitous labour. They increased the *barshchina* to five and six days per week. The peasants, men, women and children, worked on manorial lands from sunrise to sunset. At the end of the first quarter of the 19th century the peasants were sometimes completely employed on the landlord's estate in the capacity of labourers, receiving monthly payment in kind. This form of exploitation was called *mesyachina* (from the Russian word *mesyats*, meaning month).

The state peasants in the Ukraine had to pay high taxes which absorbed as much as 40% of their annual income. Frequently they were unable to meet the taxes and state dues and abandoned their plots to work as wage labourers for the landlords or to seek seasonal employment elsewhere. Most of them became carters transporting salt from the Crimea, fish from the Don, and grain and goods to the ports and fairs. Other occupations, such as carpentry, pottery making, coal mining, tar distillation, lumbering and other trades also developed.

The first capitalist manufactories in the Ukraine arose in the first quarter of the 19th century. They were small enterprises making hats, leather, soap, rope and fats, which employed freely hired labour and were owned, as a rule, by merchants. The cloth manufactories as well as the distilleries and sugar factories remained in the hands of the landlords. The distilling industry made rapid progress. Fairs were becoming ever more popular and widespread. At the Kiev commercial fairs contracts were concluded for the sale of corn, the leasing of estates, the marketing of handicraft wares, etc.

The Ukraine was becoming a growing market for the sale of Russian goods. In the first quarter of the 19th century almost a third of the entire output of the Russian textile industry was sold in the Ukraine.

The Black Sea ports of Odessa, Nikolayev and Kherson became centres of Russian trade with Western Europe and the countries of the East.

The second half of the 18th century witnessed a further increase in the Ukraine's colonial dependence on Russia, attended at the same time by a development of economic and cultural ties between the two countries.

Western Ukraine, which had been relinquished to Austria under the partition of Rzecz Pospolita, received the name of Galicia. The Austrian government strove to Germanize the population of Galicia for which purpose a German university was opened in Lwow at the end of the 18th century. Under Austrian rule Galicia remained an agrarian, economically backward country, with the land practically monopolized by the Polish landlords. The Polish gentry strove to preserve serfdom, and as a result peasant uprisings were frequent in Galicia.

## 29. TRANSCAUCASIA IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE 19TH CENTURY

**Eastern Georgia Under Russia.** In the 18th century Transcaucasia was split up into a number of small feudal states. Eastern Georgia was subject chiefly to Persia, while Western Georgia was under the domination of Turkey. Sanguinary wars between Persia and Turkey led to the even greater dismemberment of Caucasian and Transcaucasian territory.

In the 18th century the peasants of Georgia suffered from frequent attacks by foreign enemies as well as from feudal internecine strife and feudal exploitation. The interminable conflicts between the Georgian feudal lords contributed to the debasement and ruin of the country. The Turkish conquerors forcibly converted thousands of Georgians to Mohammedanism. Every year thousands of inhabitants of Transcaucasia were sold into slavery by the Turks and the Persians. Especially did the slave trade flourish in Circassia. Both Turkey and Persia plundered and devastated the lands they had seized in Transcaucasia.

The wars waged in the second quarter of the 18th century by Shah Nadir of Persia against the Turks and Daghestanians for possession of Transcaucasia and Daghestan bled the country white. The "extraordinary tax" levied on the population of Georgia by Shah Nadir in connection with his Indian campaign led to a number of peasant uprisings which were brutally suppressed. Only after the death of the Persian conqueror did Georgia begin to revive.

An Eastern Georgian kingdom independent of both Persia and Turkey was founded under King Heraclius II.

Heraclius II was an indefatigable ruler and a brave warrior. In his determination to create a strong Georgian state, he waged effective war both against the feudal lords and the raiding Daghestan tribes.

The king also promoted education, establishing seminaries in Telav and Tiflis (Tbilisi), and endeavoured to develop the handicrafts, trade and industry in Georgia. He invited miners from Greece to develop the copper deposits. In these activities he was supported by the Armenian bourgeoisie. The peasants, ruined by the preceding wars, were not able to pay their taxes, and Heraclius had to use armed force to collect them. The Georgian feudal lords robbed and ruined the peasants, who rose up in arms against their exploiters. In 1770 mass uprisings broke out among the monastery peasants against the Bodbiisk Monastery in Kakhetia, Eastern Georgia. Particularly serious were the peasant uprisings in Kartalinia in 1719, 1743 and 1744. In 1773 there were also big uprisings against the feudal lords in the hill-country of Pshavia. In 1775 there was an outbreak among the peasants of the Portant Monastery followed the next year by the peasants of Bishop Justine of Arbin. In the eighties of the 18th century peasant uprisings spread throughout Kakhetia.

At the beginning of the 18th century the so-called "Laws of King Vakhtang" were issued to combat the peasant movement. King Heraclius II was also compelled to take up the peasant question. He tried to ease the burden of serfdom by issuing a law which allowed serfs returning from foreign captivity to choose their lords at their own free will, and another law which prohibited the sale of peasants apart from the land or singly. He limited to thirty years the period during which fugitive serfs could be sought and returned; if they remained at large after this period they were to receive their freedom.

With three big countries—Persia, Turkey and Russia—vying for supremacy in Transcaucasia, the kingdom of Georgia found itself in a difficult position. This led Heraclius II to seek outside help, primarily from Russia. Fearing a new invasion by the Persians and Turks, he signed a treaty in 1783 accepting a Russian protectorate over Georgia. Tsarist Russia availed herself of this treaty to entrench herself in Transcaucasia. The Russian army built a fortress at the starting point of the mountain road leading to Georgia and gave it the significant name of Vladikavkaz (Rule the Caucasus). At the cost of great effort and many lives Russian soldiers built the Georgian Military Highway through the Daryal Gorge.

Persia and Turkey, Georgia's ancient enemies, were infuriated by the treaty which made Georgia a protectorate of Russia. In 1795 the hordes of Khan Aga Mahommed, the Persian shah, invaded Azerbaijan, but met here with strong resistance. In September of the same year they attacked Georgia. Such a terrible invasion of the country had not been witnessed since the days of Genghis Khan and Tamerlane. Tiflis was razed to the ground and over 10,000 Georgian captives were led off to Persia.

At the beginning of 1798 Heraclius II died at a venerable age,

leaving his kingdom despoiled and helpless. His son, the feeble-minded George XII, became king of Georgia. Bitter intestine strife flared up again. All the members of George XII's large family owned appanages and mercilessly plundered the peasants.

George XII took an oath of allegiance to Russia as her vassal and sent an embassy to St. Petersburg with a petition that Georgia be annexed to Russia. He died at the end of 1800, before Paul I issued his manifesto on the incorporation of Georgia. Paul issued the manifesto on January 18, 1801, but owing to his death it was not put into force. In September 1801 the new Russian emperor, Alexander I, issued a manifesto on the incorporation of Georgia "in order to rid the Georgian people of their sorrows." Eastern Georgia became a Russian region, subsequently called the Tiflis gubernia. That Georgia became a colony of tsarist Russia, was the least of all evils. Weakened and devastated by endless wars and rebellions, Georgia was experiencing a grave social and economic crisis and was unable to defend herself against her enemies. Georgia's annexation to such a powerful country as was the Russian Empire saved the Georgian people from being completely absorbed by Persia or Turkey. Between Russia and Georgia there existed a religious and cultural kinship, and under those historical conditions Russia was the only progressive power capable of ensuring the further development of Georgia's productive forces.

**The Conquest of Transcaucasia.** After Eastern Georgia was annexed to Russia in 1801 the tsarist government embarked upon the conquest of all Transcaucasia. The most energetic exponent of the tsarist policy of conquest was Prince Tsitsianov, the son of an ancient Georgian noble family who had received his education in Russia. He was a crafty, subtle and cruel tsarist satrap. In a letter to Joseph Stalin the working people of Georgia described this enslaver as follows:

*And the satrap of the despot tsar,  
Tsitsianov, a Georgian prince,  
Marched with armies against the Caucasus  
To burn and hang us.*

At the end of 1802 Tsitsianov was appointed commander-in-chief and began to carry out a ruthless policy of conquest in Transcaucasia. He annexed to Russia Mingrelia, Guria and Imeretia. This "rounding off" of Russia's Transcaucasian possessions was effected not only by force of arms but also by subtle diplomacy and bribery. Tsitsianov adroitly made use of the incessant conflicts among the feudal lords and the peasant uprisings against them to consolidate tsarist Russia's power in Transcaucasia.

Some of the Georgian feudal lords strove to recover their feudal privileges and restore the Georgian kingdom under the protectorate



of Persia. Prince Alexander, a son of Heraclius II and the most irreconcilable of the feudal lords, left for Persia together with other discontented princes to muster forces for a struggle against Russia.

In 1804 Tsitsianov began the conquest of the Erivan khanate. After besieging the fortress of Erivan for two months he was compelled to withdraw. At the end of 1805 he started a campaign against the Baku khanate. Possession of the Baku khanate was important because it offered an outlet to the Caspian and also because it could be used as a stepping stone for subsequent action against Persia. Tsitsianov invested the fortress of Baku and demanded that the keys of the fortress gates be surrendered to him. The khan of Baku pretended to give in, but half a mile from the town Tsitsianov was killed by a shot from behind. His head was sent to Persia as a present to the heir of the shah.

The Baku khanate was subjugated in the autumn of 1806, after the death of Tsitsianov. The adjacent khanate of Kuba was conquered at the same time.

All the conquered khanates of Azerbaijan were formed into two gubernias—the Elizavetpol and the Baku.

Persia and Turkey, supported by England and France, refused to cede the Caucasian and Transcaucasian territories to the Russian tsar. The English and French governments gave them assistance with money and instructors and incited them to make war on Russia.

Persia declared war on Russia in 1805, and Turkey at the end of 1806. Both wars dragged on for many years. Persia received help from Napoleon, who sent army instructors and engineers. England likewise pursued a policy of inciting Persia and Turkey against Russia. But notwithstanding their overwhelming numerical superiority and the assistance rendered by the French and English instructors, the Persian and Turkish armies suffered a series of severe defeats. In a treaty concluded with Russia, Persia renounced all claim to Daghestan and Georgia and promised not to maintain warships in the Caspian. Russian merchants were granted privileges for trade with Persia. The war against Turkey was fought on two fronts: in Transcaucasia and in the Balkans. It ended with the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest in May 1812, under which Turkey returned the ancient Russian lands of Ismail and Bessarabia to Russia.

In Asia the former frontiers between Russia and Turkey were restored. Turkey renounced her claims to Western Georgia, which subsequently became the Kutais gubernia.

The war between Russia and Persia lasted until 1813. England acted as mediator in bringing the war to a close, her aim being to achieve, in alliance with tsarist Russia, a speedy termination of the war against Napoleon.

The victories of the Russian army in Transcaucasia compelled Persia to conclude the Treaty of Gulistan (1813) by which the khanates located on the territory of present-day Azerbaijan were incorporated into Russia "in perpetuity."

**Transcaucasia After Incorporation Into Russia.** The security from foreign invasion that Georgia received as a result of her union with Russia saved the Georgian people not only from extermination but from the forcible inculcation of the Moslem faith and customs. The inclusion of Transcaucasia into the Russian empire gave it a new impetus towards capitalist development.

On the eve of the 19th century natural economy predominated in Georgia. The peasant family produced not only corn but all its cloth, footwear and household articles. The towns of Georgia had not yet become centres of industry. Only Tiflis had any industry at all, and that in an embryonic stage: ordnance, gunpowder and glass works, printshops and a mint.

In the years immediately following incorporation into Russia, Georgian trade developed very slowly owing to the lack of roads, constant internal uprisings and the wars that were waged on her borders. Trade was chiefly carried on by Armenian merchants, who shipped raw silk and wool to Moscow and to the fair at Makaryev. To stimulate local trade the Russian authorities abolished the inland toll-gates.

Favourable tariffs on foreign goods made Tiflis a medium for French and German trade with Persia. The tariffs in force in Transcaucasia, however, were detrimental to the Russian merchants and manufacturers, who in 1831 succeeded in having them abolished.

"Commandant's administration" was introduced in the conquered khanates of Azerbaijan. The name khanate was changed to province and Russian officers were placed at their head as commandants. A system of feudal oppression of the population, particularly of the peasantry, was established in all the subjugated khanates.

The tsarist government strove to gain the support of the Georgian landlords and required absolute submission to them on the part of the peasants. Peasant uprisings were quelled by armed force. The peasants had to bear not only intensified feudal oppression but a colonial yoke as well. Like the princes of old who had travelled about with their retinues robbing the countryside, Russian and Georgian officials and officers now lived off the Georgian peasantry for weeks on end while on hunting trips. The courts and administration were conducted in Russian, a language which the peasants did not understand, and they had nowhere to turn for protection. The extortionate demands for deliveries of supplies and means of transport, and the forced labour on road building led to incessant peasant disturbances and revolts.

In the spring of 1804 an uprising broke out among the peasants

rendering road services in the mountains, on the Georgian Military Highway. The rebels seized the entire highway. The uprising lasted several months and was crushed only after troops had been called in from the Caucasian fortifications.

The methods used to quell the uprising can be judged from the instructions given to the army commanders, who were told "to be ruthless, to hack with sword and bayonet, burn down the villages, abandon all thought of mercy to the villains and barbarians."

A peasant uprising which broke out in 1809 in South Ossetia lasted a whole year. But the most formidable uprising was that which took place in Kakhetia in 1812-1813. Here the peasants were compelled to supply cattle, carts and men for the army transport system. This completely disorganized their farming. A terrible famine and the plague filled the cup of the peasants' misery.

The uprising broke out in January 1812 in the village of Akhmeti, Telav district. The peasants rose up to a man in response to the tocsin which served as a signal. Within a few days the uprising had spread to three districts. "Better death than such a life" was the slogan of the rebels.

Two weeks later the uprising was crushed, but in the autumn of 1812 it flared up again and was put down with difficulty only in 1813.

### 30. THE PEOPLES OF THE VOLGA, BASHKIRIA AND SIBERIA IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE 19TH CENTURY

**The Peoples of the Volga.** The Russian landlords who had firmly entrenched themselves on the Middle Volga as well as the native landlords from among the Christianized *murzi* (Tatar nobles) and princes continued to seize the black-earth lands of the local peasants in the forest and steppe districts. The Chuvashes and the Mari were transferred to the woodland districts. The Tatars and the Mordvinians were driven into the steppe, where land was still being settled. The peasants were dispossessed of the best lands lying on the banks of the rivers. Under the "general demarcation act" of 1765 the land of the local peasants was allocated to Russian landlord-colonizers. In numerous petitions to the governor of Kazan the Tatar, Chuvash and Mari peasants complained of encroachments on their pastures, meadows and ploughland.

Forcible conversion of the Volga peoples to Christianity had begun in the second half of the 18th century. Sometimes the tsarist authorities would drive entire villages of Chuvashes and Mordvinians down to the river and baptize them *en masse*. Sometimes they would be tempted with presents, each convert receiving a cross, a ruble and a white shirt. The unchristened Tatar *murzi* and sultans were deprived of their serfs by a special order of the government.

The government colonized the Lower Volga with Tatar, Mordvinian and Chuvash settlers forcibly removed from the Middle and Upper Volga. Together with the Russians these peoples laid the foundation for the economic and cultural development of the Lower Volga. In the second half of the 18th century villages of German colonists sprang up along both banks of the Volga, around Saratov and farther south. To develop the vast steppes more rapidly the government of Catherine II had issued a manifesto in 1763 inviting foreigners to settle in Russia. In response to this invitation more than 20,000 settlers came from France, Sweden and particularly from Germany, where the peasantry had been ruined by the Seven Years' War, and settled on the Volga. The foreign settlers received 30 dessiatins (about 80 acres) of land per family and loans to set themselves up.

Settlements of Ukrainian carters brought over from the Ukraine to break and transport salt from Lake Elton sprang up on the Lower Volga. Beyond Tsaritsyn lay the lands of corporate Cossackdom who protected the Volga area against inroads by the nomad Kalmucks and Kazakhs.

The growth of the home market and corn exports increased the demand upon the landlords for corn. The landlords, in quest of new tillage, were particularly vigorous in colonizing the steppes adjoining the Volga. In the last quarter of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th century all the vacant government-owned land in the Volga area was distributed among the nobles and various servitors. A particularly large amount of land was distributed during the reign of Paul I, who granted one of his favourites, Naryshkin, more than half a million dessiatins. Scores of thousands of dessiatins were distributed among other landlords right up to 1820, when an ukase was issued prohibiting the grant of lands along the hilly west bank of the Volga.

The landlords who colonized the Lower Volga also seized land that had been previously allotted to the peasant settlers of various nationalities.

The colonial oppression and ruthless exploitation of the peoples of the Volga led to peasant uprisings. The biggest uprisings in this period were those of the Mordvinians in Nizhni Novgorod Region (1808-1810).

The Mordvinian peasants of Tyureshev district raided the landlord's office, killed the manager and seized the harvest on the landlord's fields. They routed the tsarist detachment that had been sent out to suppress them. At secret gatherings held in the woods the Mordvinians discussed ways of freeing themselves from the oppression of the Russian landlords. Kuzma Alexeyev, a Mordvinian serf, headed the movement.

The government arrested all the leaders of the uprising. The accusation brought against Alexeyev was that he had demanded that the

Mordvinians be allowed to wear their national costume and live in accordance with their own native customs. The tsarist court sentenced him to the whipping post and to exile to Siberia.

**The Bashkirs.** In the first half of the 19th century most of the Bashkirs (a Turkic people) lived in the Orenburg region. Their chief occupation was cattle breeding, but they had already begun to engage in agriculture as well. By the beginning of the 19th century they had gone over from a nomadic to a semi-nomadic life; they roamed in summer and lived in permanent dwellings in winter. A law issued in 1798 converted the Bashkirs into a military estate. Together with the Orenburg Cossacks they had to carry out sentry duty along the Orenburg border fortifications, from Tobol to the Caspian Sea. The men sent off to serve on this line had to possess four army horses and their own arms and ammunition. For unsatisfactory fulfilment of their duties Bashkirs were forced to work at state-owned factories and mines in the Urals. A law was passed in 1832 providing for the demarcation of land between the Bashkirs and tenants who had been allowed to settle Bashkirian lands under various conditions. The purpose of the law was to restrict Bashkir land tenure. Demarcation served as a pretext for new seizures of Bashkirian lands. The Bashkirs rose repeatedly against their oppressors; throughout the first half of the 19th century they waged a constant struggle for liberation; many Bashkirs, it will be remembered, had fought in Pugachev's detachments in the 18th century.

**The Peoples of Siberia.** Siberia knew neither landlord tenure nor serfdom, but patriarchal slavery prevailed here up to the first quarter of the 19th century. Slavery was prohibited in Siberia only in 1826. The forms of colonial oppression were very similar to slavery. The numerous peoples inhabiting this vast territory were under the power of an absolute and uncontrolled officialdom.

In 1819 M. M. Speransky, who had been in disfavour since 1812, was appointed governor-general of Siberia, where he introduced a number of administrative and economic "reforms."

Speransky drew up the so-called "Aliens Regulation," which outlined a new system of administering the subjugated peoples of Siberia. The Siberian tribes, which up to then had been called "the heterodox" and *yasachniye* (payers of *yasak*, or tribute in pelts) were now called "aliens." They were divided into settled, nomad and vagrant tribes. The "Aliens Regulation" consolidated the dominant position of the upper stratum of feudal lords and upheld the most backward customs. Speransky took measures to assure uninterrupted receipt of the *yasak*. The extent and quality of the land consigned to the "aliens" depended on the amount of *yasak* they paid.

The taxes and dues imposed upon the people at large became more and more intolerable. At the beginning of the 19th century the "aliens"

were assessed according to the census of 1763, *i.e.*, they paid taxes both for themselves and their deceased clansmen. There were cases when a group which had decreased to one-fourth of what it had been in 1763 paid taxes according to the old census. The land of native inhabitants was frequently seized by the Russian *kulaks*, or rich peasants, who settled in Siberia. The local population was crowded back to less favourably situated lands. The Evenki, for example, were driven away from the river banks, and their best hunting grounds were turned into ploughlands and meadows by Russian settlers.

Brutal colonial exploitation led to impoverishment, famine, disease and to the extinction of the masses of the working people. During a famine in the Turukhan territory at the beginning of the 19th century there were many instances of cannibalism. Between the middle of the 18th and middle of the 19th century the number of Itelmens (Kamchadales) dwindled from 20,000 to 2,000.

The late twenties of the 19th century saw the beginning of a forcible conversion of the peoples of Siberia to Christianity. Missionaries resorted to both threats and promises in order to convert the Siberian peoples.

Nobody was concerned with spreading literacy among the local population. Schools existed only in the towns, and the "aliens" had virtually no access to them. When the governor asked permission to send several especially capable Yakut boys to the St. Petersburg Technological Institute, the Ministry of Education suggested that they be sent instead to some local workshop. Only the well-to-do were able to acquire an education, and not in all cases.

**Expeditions and Voyages in the First Quarter of the 19th Century.** At the beginning of the 19th century large expeditions were fitted out to the northeastern and northern shores of Siberia, most of them on business connected with the Russian-American Company founded in the reign of Paul I. This company, which enjoyed "the royal patronage," had a monopoly on fur hunting and exploitation of all the resources of North America, Asia, Southern Sakhalin and the mouth of the Amur River.

The first and most significant expedition was Adam Ivan von Krusenstern's voyage around the world in 1803-1806. At that time the Russian fur trade with China was carried on overland via Kyakhta. Krusenstern came to the conclusion that it could be conducted more profitably by sea. An expedition was fitted out in the summer of 1803 to carry out his plan. Krusenstern crossed the Atlantic Ocean, rounded South America and entered the Pacific Ocean. After reaching the shores of Kamchatka and Japan he rounded Asia and Africa from the south and came back to the Atlantic. This expedition explored the eastern shores of Sakhalin, Kamchatka, the Kurile and Aleutian Islands,

and the northwestern coast of North America. Krusenstern described his journey in detail in his book *Voyage Round the World of the Ships "Nadezhda" and "Neva" in 1803-1806 Under the Command of Krusenstern*.

In 1809-1811 an expedition under Hedenström explored the New Siberian Islands in the Arctic Ocean. In 1810 a member of the expedition named Sannikov reached the northernmost island of the New Siberian group and reported land north of this island. The existence of "Sannikov Land," however, has been refuted by later expeditions undertaken by the Soviet government. Between 1815 and 1818 an expedition on the ship *Rurik* explored Kamchatka, Chukotsk and Bering Strait. The first map of Kamchatka and Chukotsk was compiled by the well-known navigator Litke, who explored the northeastern coast of Siberia in 1821-1824. The expedition under Wrangel in 1820-1824, which investigated the northern coast of Siberia from the Lena estuary to Bering Strait, had great significance.

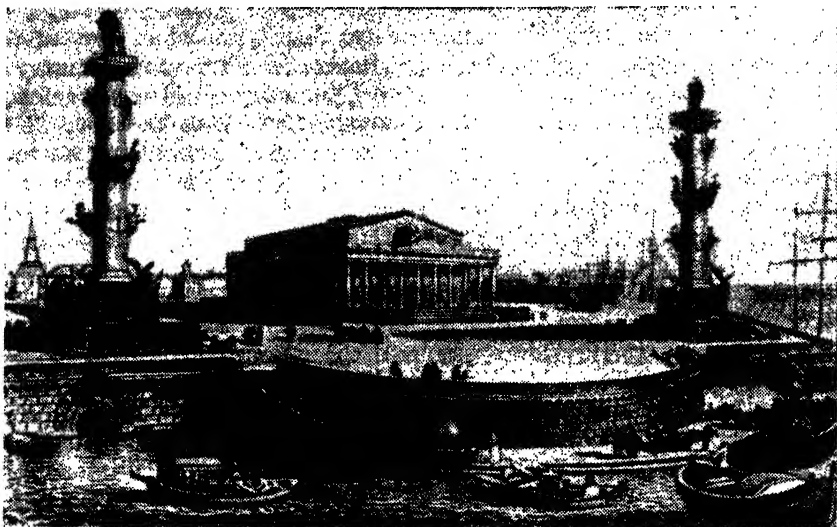
## Chapter VII

# THE DECEMBRISTS

### 31. THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE 19TH CENTURY

**The Birth of Industrial Capitalism.** Capitalist development started in tsarist Russia later than in other countries. By the middle of the 18th century serf labour had gone out of existence in England, where the industrial revolution was replacing hand labour by steam-driven machinery. Serfdom in France was swept away by the bourgeois revolution of 1789-1794. At the beginning of the 19th century Prussia, then a more backward country than England or France, had also started to abolish serfdom. Russian economics were still governed by the system of serfdom. Nevertheless, in the first quarter of the 19th century, Russia too entered upon the path of industrial capitalism. The increase in the number of factories, and particularly the employment of hired labour, were undeniable signs of progress in capitalist industry. In 1804 Russia had 2,423 factories employing 95,000 workers, of whom 45,000 were freely hired. By 1825 the number of factories had grown to 5,261 and the number of workers to 211,000, of whom 114,000 were freely hired.

Thus already half of all the workers engaged in the factories were freely hired. Some enterprises, the cotton mills for example, were based primarily on freely hired labour. True, the majority of the freely hired



Stock exchange in St. Petersburg

workers were serf peasants who worked in the factories frequently at their landlords' orders so as to be able to pay them *obrok* (money rents). The spread of the *obrok* system on the landlords' estates at the beginning of the 19th century was a concomitant of industrial development. The tens of thousands of *obrok*-paying peasants who had gone to work in the factories and mills constituted the bulk of the industrial workers.

Peasant domestic industry developed side by side with the capitalist manufactories employing hired workers. At the beginning of the 19th century the centre of capitalist manufacturing which developed out of peasant domestic industry was the village of Ivanovo. Factors and distributors supplied yarn to the peasant domestic workshops and bought up their cloth, which was finished at the factories. By exploiting their fellow-villagers some of the serf peasants grew rich and were able to set up manufactories of their own.

But industry could not develop properly under serfdom. Serfdom hampered the rise of an industrial proletariat and retarded the proletarianization of the village. The *obrok*-paying peasants employed in industry could be recalled to the village by their landlord at will. The workers had to turn over practically all their earnings to their landlords, and were consequently not interested in their work and performed it badly. Their labour was of conspicuously low productivity.

The development of capitalist industry required an adequate home market, but with the self-sufficient peasant economy satisfying all



local demands, the home market was restricted. Hence the demand for goods grew slowly, although steadily. Finally, serfdom prevented the free accumulation of capital available for investment in industry. And without a constant influx of capital, industry could not develop.

**Mass Movement in the First Quarter of the 19th Century.** The demand for corn on the home and foreign markets stimulated an increase in the cultivation of marketable corn, which the landlords endeavoured to accomplish by intensifying the exploitation of their serfs. They increased the *barshchina* to 5 and 6 days per week and raised the *obrok* to 75 rubles per household. The peasants rebelled at the intensified exploitation. The landlords brutally quelled the rebels with armed force. The biggest uprising took place on the Don in 1820 and spread throughout the Don region and the adjoining districts of the Ekaterinoslav gubernia. This uprising was an expression of protest against the attempt of landlord-officials to enthrall the peasants who had migrated to the Don area from other parts of Russia and settled on the vacant lands, and regarded themselves as freemen. The uprising was crushed by armed force.

The mass movement was particularly wide in the Urals industrial regions, notably at Kyshtym, where the workers and peasants revolted against deferred wage payments and the high price of bread in the factory stores. The workers of the adjacent area of Ufaiei joined the Kyshtym workers. The rebels chose Klimenti Kosolapov, a Kyshtym worker, as their leader. Troops were sent to put down the Kyshtym and Ufaiei workers. Kosolapov and his 12 associates were seized and brought to Ekaterinburg. The workers were flogged.

Unrest was rife in the army as well. Military service lasted for a term of twenty-five years. The soldiers were subjected to brutal corporal punishment for the slightest offence. "I'm the country's defender, but my back is always tender," ran the words of a popular soldier's song of the time.

Upon their return home after victory over Napoleon the members of the popular levy hoped to receive freedom, but the old oppression by the landlords awaited them instead. "We have shed our blood," they complained, "and we are again compelled to sweat on the *barshchina*. We have rid our country of a tyrant, and again our master tyrannizes us."

The biggest revolt in the army broke out in the Semyonovsky Guards Regiment at St. Petersburg in October 1820. It was provoked by the brutal treatment of the soldiers by Regimental Commander Schwarz, who had established a system of terror intolerable even in Arakcheyev's times. A company mutinied and was supported by the whole battalion. The soldiers behaved peaceably, although they had arms. The rebels of the Semyonovsky Regiment had the sympathies of the entire garrison. The men, however, lacked leaders and the re-

bellion was savagely suppressed. Six hundred men were beaten, some of them to death, with ramrods.

At the end of October 1820 copies of a proclamation dealing with the events in the Semyonovsky Regiment were found in the barracks of the Preobrazhensky Regiment. The leaflet said: "There is nothing to be expected from the tsar; he himself is just a powerful robber." This was the first political leaflet against the tsar distributed among the soldiers.

**The Revolutionary Nobles.** The beginnings of capitalism in Russia brought progressive men to a realization of what an obstacle serfdom constituted to the development of the country's productive forces. They were also becoming convinced of the need for changing the autocratic political system, under which millions of people were turned into slaves. The people's war of 1812 also spurred many progressive minds to the realization that a struggle against serfdom was inevitable. It caused them to ponder over the grievous plight of an enslaved people, who had so heroically defended their homeland, and to seek for a way out. The progressive ideas of the French bourgeois revolution also served as a powerful impetus in awakening the political consciousness of the finest section of the educated Russian nobility.

The patriotic young officers who had fought in the war of 1812 and in the campaigns abroad studied the ideas of the Encyclopaedists; they eagerly read the political essays of Montesquieu, Rousseau and other progressive writers.

Paris, which was then the centre of political activity,\* exercised a great influence on these officers. In Paris Russia's educated youth became acquainted with various political trends, read pamphlets and newspapers of diverse tendencies; they began to think politically and were fired with a desire to act. The young revolutionary nobles studied the bourgeois constitutions of various countries, discussing their advantages and their applicability to Russia.

The movement for national liberation and the revolutionary events in Europe—in the Balkans, Italy and Spain—made an even greater impression on the minds of the progressive officers. "From one end of Europe to another," wrote Pestel, "one and the same thing is happening. From Portugal to Russia, in every country without exception, not even England or Turkey—those two opposites—the spirit of reformation, the spirit of the times, is compelling, so to speak, minds to see the everywhere."

Riego, the leader of the Spanish "zealots of freedom," was to the revolutionary nobles of Russia a symbol of heroic struggle for freedom. His execution in 1823 aroused among them a storm of indignation and protest.

The young officers were particularly struck by the sharp contrast between bourgeois Europe and serf Russia when they returned home

from their foreign campaigns. In bourgeois Europe industry was growing, trade was developing, the sciences were flourishing, and the population enjoyed a certain measure of freedom. In feudal Russia they saw appalling conditions of economic backwardness, serf slavery, universal ignorance, despotic rule. They were especially disgusted over the wretched lot of the peasants and the urban population. The progressive nobles drew the conclusion that "the attachment of the peasant to the land is the cause of all our internal troubles."

They described the insufferable life of the soldier, a doomed slave condemned to serve twenty-five years with no hope of ever returning to his family, subjected to harsh drill and ill-usage and living a hungry life. Yet while they had been abroad "both the officers and the lower ranks had seen their fill of foreign ways, had seen that there the troops enjoyed big privileges and great respect" (from the testimony of the Decembrist Zavalishin).

### 32. THE UPRISING OF DECEMBER 14, 1825

**Secret Societies of the Revolutionary Nobles.** The revolutionary nobles organized secret political societies with the aim of changing the order of things in Russia. Many Russian revolutionary nobles were at first members of religious-ethical associations, the Masonic lodges, which they used to advance their political purpose.

The first secret political society of revolutionary nobles was founded in 1816. It was called the Society of the True and Loyal Sons of the Fatherland, or the League of Salvation. Colonel Alexander Muravyov was the founder of the society, which had 20 members. Its aim was to emancipate the peasants from serfdom and to establish a constitutional monarchy in Russia. Two trends, one moderate and the other militant, took shape within the society. The militants were headed by Colonel Pavel Ivanovich Pestel (1793-1826).

Two years later the League of Prosperity (1818-1821) was founded. This was not such a narrow conspirative society and had 200 members with local branches. The most revolutionary was the Southern Branch, organized by Colonel Pestel in the Ukraine (in Tulchin). Under the influence of Pestel the League of Prosperity declared itself in favour of a republic.

At a congress of the League held in Moscow in January 1821 sharp differences of opinion were revealed. The moderate members announced the League disbanded.

Pestel did not agree with the decision of the congress and in 1821 founded a new organization, the Southern Association (1821-1825), among whose prominent members were Pestel, the leader of the association, Bestuzhev-Ryumin, Sergei Muravyov-Apostol and Davydov. Pestel was a well-educated man of broad intellect and masterful charac-

ter. Pushkin wrote of him: "Pestel is a clever man in every sense of the word. He is one of the most original minds I know."

Pestel had fought gallantly against Napoleon in 1812 and was wounded in the Battle of Borodino. He had also fought in the Russian army's foreign campaigns of 1813-1815. Ever since his youth Pestel had been interested in the social sciences and had studied the works of Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau and many other European philosophers. The revolution in the West, his indignation at the system of serfdom and despotism that reigned in Russia, and his reading of political literature made Pestel an ardent champion of revolution and a republic.



P. I. Pestel.

*From a contemporary drawing*

Pestel drew up a program for the constitutional reformation of Russia which he named *Russkaya Pravda* (Russian Truth).

According to Pestel's plan Russia, as the result of a *coup d'état*, was to become an "indivisible republic" with a strong centralized government. He proposed to kill off all the members of the royal family. After the overthrow of the monarchy the dictatorship of a Provisional Supreme Administration was to be proclaimed. There were to be three supreme bodies of authority: a legislative body called the *Narodnoye Veche* (Popular Assembly); an executive body called *Derzhavnaya Duma* (State Duma); and a supervising body, the *Verkhovny Sobor* (Supreme Assembly), which was to control proper execution of the laws. Pestel proposed that the republic be organized along democratic lines: the abolition of the division of society into estates, and the granting of equal rights and equal liberties to all citizens. The right to vote was not to be restricted by property or educational qualifications.

The *Russkaya Pravda* proclaimed the emancipation of the peasants with land, without any compensation to the landlords. All the arable land was to be divided into two sections. Half of the land was to constitute a public fund made up of estates confiscated from the landlords, from which every citizen could receive a plot. This fund was to be under communal ownership and could neither be bought nor sold. The other half was to consist of state land and such privately-

owned lands as had not been confiscated by the state. These were designated for "abundance" and could be bought and sold. Thus, Pestel's agrarian project seriously undermined landlord ownership without entirely abolishing it.

In 1822 the Northern Association was founded in St. Petersburg. It existed up to 1825 and among its members were the poet Ryleyev, Pushchin and Yakushkin. The head of the association was Nikita Muravyov (1795-1826), an officer of the guards. In 1812 young Muravyov ran away from home to join the army, and had fought in the foreign campaign. While in Paris he witnessed an election campaign. There he also collected a good library of revolutionary books. After his return to Russia he became one of the organizers of the secret Northern Association.

Muravyov studied all the European constitutions and even the constitutions of the 23 states of North America. He laid many of their features at the basis of a constitution which he drafted. According to his draft Russia was to remain a monarchy. The emperor's power was to be limited by a *Narodnoye Veche* (Popular Assembly) consisting of two chambers: an upper chamber called the Supreme Duma, and a lower, the Chamber of People's Representatives. Only property owners were to have the right to elect and be elected to the Popular Assembly, particularly to the Supreme Duma. Serfdom was to be abolished but the land left in the hands of the landlords. The peasants were to receive only a cottage, a plot of land around it, livestock and implements. Muravyov's final draft granted every serf peasant a plot of two dessiatins upon emancipation.

The draft was criticized by the radical members of the Northern Association.

"The main thing is to settle the question of land ownership," said Pestel. "It is essential to turn over the land to the peasants: only then will the aim of the revolution be achieved."

The poet Kondrati Fyodorovich Ryleyev (1795-1826) played an important part in the Northern Association. He too had fought in the war against Napoleon and in the campaign abroad. Army life did not satisfy him, however, and he retired. In 1823 Ryleyev began to publish the magazine *North Star* in collaboration with Bestuzhev. This magazine and Ryleyev's poetry had a great influence on the young nobles. In 1820 Ryleyev won popularity as the first man who dared to expose Arakcheyev, the tsar's favourite. Ryleyev joined the Northern Association in 1823 and took an active part in the preparations for the uprising of December 14, 1825. Ryleyev said of himself: "I am not a poet but a citizen." His poetry was permeated with humanitarian ideas, with love of freedom and hatred for slavery. Ryleyev was one of the most ardent champions of a struggle against tsarism. He knew that this might entail defeat, but he was imbued with a passion-

ate faith in the ultimate victory of a righteous cause. These sentiments have been excellently expressed in his poem *Confession of Nalivaiko*.

Simultaneous with the founding of the Northern and Southern associations there arose in Volhynia (Ukraine) another secret society, called the Association of United Slavs, founded by the BorISOV brothers, who were army officers, Gorbachevsky and other men. Its membership consisted of petty officers of humble origin and nobles who were not in army service. The Association of United Slavs had no outlined program but was very emphatic about the need of abolishing tsarist rule and serfdom, and stood for the organization of a federal democratic republic of all the Slav countries. Whereas the members of the Northern and



K. F. Ryleyev.

*From a contemporary drawing*

Southern associations advocated a military revolution organized by a close circle of conspirators, the members of the Association of United Slavs endeavoured also to carry on propaganda among the masses of soldiers. In the summer of 1825 the Association of United Slavs accepted Pestel's program and united with the Southern Association.

**The Decembrist Uprising.** In November 1825 Alexander I died suddenly in Taganrog. Being without issue, his brother, Konstantin, was to have succeeded him. But Konstantin had renounced the throne during Alexander's lifetime. The throne was to have been ascended by Alexander's third brother, Nicholas, but he renounced it in favour of Konstantin. In the end it was Nicholas and not Konstantin who became emperor. During the interregnum, while the brothers were engaged in a correspondence, and messengers plied between St. Petersburg and Warsaw (where Konstantin was living at the time) the members of the Northern Association took advantage of the confusion reigning in ruling military circles and decided to bring troops out onto the street on December 14 (26)—the day appointed for taking the oath of allegiance to Nicholas—with the object of refusing to take the oath and demanding a constitution.

On the morning of December 14, 1825, the regiments commanded by Decembrists marched to Senate Square. Over three thousand rebel soldiers and sailors formed a square around the monument to Peter I,

but they remained inactive. Proper preparations had not been made for the uprising and the leaders were irresolute. At the last minute Sergei Trubetskoi, who had been appointed dictator, had qualms as to whether the rebels would be able to cope with the situation, and did not come out onto the square. Left without leadership, the revolt lost its organized character. By 12 o'clock Nicholas I had brought up reliable troops and artillery to the square. A crowd of serfs, artisans and poor town-dwellers streamed to Senate Square. The workmen engaged in building the St. Isaac Cathedral threw blocks of wood at the tsarist troops. At the tsar's orders the cavalry made several charges but the rebel soldiers repulsed them with a hail of bullets. Neither the persuasions of the commanders nor the exhortations of the Metropolitan could break the revolutionary will of the rebel soldiers. When Miloradovich, the governor-general of St. Petersburg, tried to persuade the rebels to disperse he was mortally wounded by Kakhovsky, one of the more resolute officers. The rebels opened up running rifle fire at the approaching tsar. But the actions of the Decembrists were not in the nature of an offensive. The tsar was extremely scared and feared that the unrest would spread to the "rabble." He gave the order to open fire with grapeshot. The artillery fire dispersed the rebel columns. Senate Square, the Neva embankment and the streets were strewn with bodies. In the night holes were made in the ice of the frozen Neva and both the dead and the wounded were let down into them. The leaders of the uprising were arrested.

A rising of the Chernigov Regiment in the Ukraine, which began on December 29, 1825 (January 10, 1826) was also defeated. On the eve of the events in St. Petersburg, Pestel was betrayed by an *agent provocateur* and arrested. Sergei Muravyov-Apostol headed the uprising. Like the St. Petersburg rebels, those in Chernigov did not dare to take up the offensive.

The more resolute members of the Association of United Slavs proposed sending a rebel regiment to capture Kiev, where sympathetic army units were stationed. But the moderate leaders of the Decembrists, headed by Sergei Muravyov-Apostol, adopted a policy of marking time. Instead of attacking Kiev, Sergei Muravyov-Apostol led the troops from Vasilkov to Belaya Tserkov and then to Zhitomir in the expectation that units headed by members of the Southern Association would join them. But his hopes did not materialize. The rebel regiment encountered government troops at the village of Kovalyovka on January 3 (15), 1826, and was fired upon with grapeshot.

The uprising was crushed and Nicholas I took ruthless reprisals against the rebels. On July 13 (25), 1826, five Decembrists—Pestel, Ryleyev, Kakhovsky, Muravyov-Apostol and Bestuzhev-Ryumin—were hanged. Owing to the inexperience of the hangmen the rope broke during the execution and three of the condemned men, Ryleyev,

Kakhovsky and Muravyov-Apostol, had to be hanged a second time. Many of the participants in the uprising were sentenced to penal servitude in Siberia. The soldiers who had taken part in the rising were made to run the gauntlet and exiled to the Caucasus. A soldier by the name of Anoichenko, whom the court sentenced to 12,000 strokes of the ramrod, died.

The rising of the Decembrists ended in failure. The revolutionary nobles had no contact with the masses and had not counted on a mass rising. They had put their faith in an army conspiracy and feared a movement of the masses. That was the reason why they were defeated. The Decembrist revolt, however, which was the first open armed uprising against tsarism cannot be underestimated. Hitherto Russia had only known sporadic peasant rebellions. The slogans of the Decembrists inspired Russian revolutionaries for decades to come. "The circle of these revolutionaries was a narrow one," Lenin wrote of the Decembrists. "They were frightfully removed from the people. But their work was not in vain." \*

In appraising this period in the history of the struggle for liberation in the 19th century, and the role of the Decembrist uprising in it, Lenin wrote: "This was the epoch from the Decembrists to Herzen. Serf Russia was downtrodden and passive. An insignificant minority of the nobles, impotent, without the support of the people, voiced a protest. But the best men among the nobles helped to awaken the people." \*\*

## Chapter VIII

# THE CRISIS OF SERFDOM

### 33. THE MONARCHY OF NICHOLAS I

**The Autocracy of Nicholas I (1825-1855).** Emperor Nicholas I, whose ascension to the throne was marked by the brutal suppression of the Decembrist uprising, made the chief task of his reign the consolidation of the autocracy and serfdom.

"A conceited mediocrity, whose horizon never exceeded that of a company officer, a man who mistook brutality for energy, and obstinacy in caprice for strength of will, who prized beyond everything the mere *show* of power, and who, therefore, by the mere show of it, could be got to do anything," \*\*\* was how Engels described the new Russian

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\* Lenin, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 537, Moscow 1946.

\*\* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. XVI, p. 575, Moscow 1937.

\*\*\* Engels, *Foreign Policy of Russian Tsardom*, "Time," 1890, London.



emperor. Nicholas' tutor had been a native of Courland named M. von Lambsdorff, who filled him with admiration for Prussian military discipline and a military-police organization of the state. Frederick William III of Prussia, the father of his wife, Charlotte, was another of the tsar's friends and advisors. Partiality for Prussian militarism was deeply ingrained in the tsarist family, and Nicholas showed the greatest predilection for it. Even as a youth he had been ruthless in drilling the soldiers under his command. Nicholas himself declared that he was happy only in the barracks. He said: "Here the rules are strict, there is complete order, and no conceit or contradictions. Everything is in its proper place. No one gives orders until he has first learned to obey them."

A cruel, slow-witted and conceited man who had never read a book, Nicholas I adhered closely to the system introduced by Arakcheyev. When one of the governors proposed to sentence two smugglers to death, Nicholas wrote the following order: "The guilty are to run the gauntlet of 1,000 men twelve times. Thank God, we have no capital punishment in Russia, and it is not for me to introduce



The drilling of recruits under Nicholas I. *From a drawing by Vasilyev*



Punishment by the ramrod. *Album of the Tengin Regiment*

it." The guilty men were beaten to death. The people aptly dubbed the tsar Nicholas *Palkin* (from the word *palka*, meaning stick).

Nicholas I continued the struggle his predecessors had waged against revolution. After crushing the Decembrist uprising, the emperor described his political program as follows: "The war against conspirators and the leaders of a conspiracy will be most pitiless and ruthless. I shall be inexorable: it is my duty to teach this lesson to Russia and Europe."

He resorted to a system of brutal terror and reinforced the police bureaucratic machine as a means of upholding the autocratic power.

He established the so-called special "Third Section" at the Imperial Chancery for political investigation. At the head of the "Third Section" stood General Benkendorf, chief of the gendarmes, who organized a corps of gendarmes and a secret political police. All Russia was divided into seven gendarme areas, each headed by a general of the gendarmes. The gendarmes, by means of their numerous secret agents, were required to "penetrate" into the state of people's minds, take notice of those who expressed themselves too freely or disparagingly on religion and authority, and to ferret out new secret societies.

A purge was carried out in the army to "stifle the designs of the

enemies of the existing order." All officers suspected of being connected with the Decembrists were discharged from the army.

Nicholas I strove to make the bureaucratic machinery of government still more centralized. He meddled in every trifle and detail of state administration. Russia resembled a vast army barracks, where all independence of initiative was crushed and all criticism silenced by fear. A foreign observer wrote: "Everything here is run like in a military school, except that the pupils do not graduate until their very death." Under Nicholas I the role of government officials assumed greater importance in all branches of the administration. Half of all the state revenue was spent on the army and the police, and no more than one per cent on education. Bribery, corruption, extortion and red tape, and the bureaucratism of the judges and officials of the times of Nicholas I have become a byword.

At first Nicholas had intended to "bring order" into the system of state institutions. To this end he set up a "Special Secret Committee" on December 6, 1826, with V. P. Kochubey, president of the State Council, at its head.

M. M. Speransky, who had been recalled from exile by Alexander I, was put in charge of organizing this work. The committee existed for several years and used up a vast quantity of paper, but it accomplished no changes whatsoever.

### **The Reactionary Policy of Nicholas I in the Field of Education.**

The fact that many young nobles had been involved in the Decembrist uprising induced Nicholas to pay particular care to the educational system. School regulations were introduced in 1828 which strictly enforced the principle of social status. The parish elementary schools were designated for the "lowest orders," the district schools for the children of merchants and craftsmen, and the gymnasias and universities for the nobility. All the activities of the educational institutions were to conform "to the spirit of Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality." This formula was an ideological expression of the struggle against the progressive and revolutionary ideas of the times. Tuition fees and corporal punishment were restored. The main subjects taught in the gymnasias were religion and Greek and Latin. So-called "*realniye* classes" were organized at some of the gymnasias and district schools in which more attention was devoted to mathematics and physics.

After the Decembrist uprising university self-government was reduced to nil. In 1835 a new university statute was published placing the universities under the jurisdiction of the local educational superintendents. A uniform was introduced for students. Theology was made a compulsory subject in all the departments. The best professors and instructors were dismissed and the number of students decreased. The tuition fee was raised "in order to check the influx

of young people born into the lower social orders for whom a higher education is useless, being a needless luxury that displaces them from their sphere without profit to themselves or to the state." That is how Uvarov, the minister of education, motivated this measure.

### 34. THE FURTHER DECLINE OF SERFDOM

**Development of the Home Market and Foreign Trade.** In the second quarter of the 19th century feudal economy in Russia continued to decline at a rapid rate. The buying and selling of products on the market became an essential factor in the life of the country. Lenin pointed out that "the production of grain for sale by the landlord, which developed particularly in the latter stages of the existence of serfdom, was the harbinger of the collapse of the old regime." \*

After the repeal of the corn laws, *i.e.*, the import duty on grain in England in 1846, Russian corn exports mounted sharply. By the end of the 'fifties corn constituted 35% of Russia's total exports, rising in some years to 50%. Russia also exported hemp, flax, rope, bristles, furs, hides, etc. She imported luxury articles as well as commodities which she did not produce herself, such as raw cotton, cotton yarn, cotton and leather manufactures, chemical products, tools and machines.

The domestic market being limited by the prevailing serf system Russian manufacturers sought a market for their goods in foreign countries, such as Turkey, Persia and Central Asia.

England who was the leading industrial country in the middle of the 19th century, being called the "workshop of the world," claimed a monopoly on these markets. In the 'thirties and 'forties Russia and England contended for the markets of the Near East and Central Asia.

In the second half of the 'forties Russia concluded trade agreements with almost all the countries of Europe. The volume of Russia's foreign trade increased 275 per cent. But compared to the trade turnover of other countries it was still insignificant, constituting only 3.6% of the total volume of international trade.

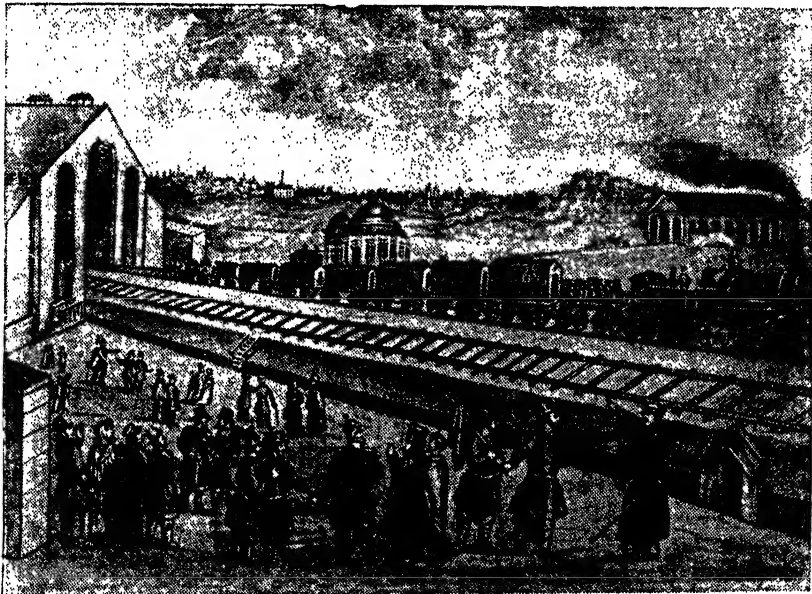
Capitalism in Russia developed on the basis of a slow but steady growth of the internal market. The demand for corn, agricultural raw materials and manufactured goods increased. The rise in demand stimulated an increase in domestic trade. This was particularly noticeable in the growth of the local and all-Russian fairs in the first half of the 19th century. The Nizhni Novgorod fair, which had been transferred to that town from the village of Makaryev, played a very important role in the national economy of Russia. A large volume of trade was also done at the Ukrainian fairs.

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\* Lenin, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 243, Moscow 1934.

among them a reform in the administration of state-owned estates was introduced by Count Kiselyov, a prominent statesman. A special Ministry of State Realities was established as a sort of guardianship over the state peasants; it delved into all aspects of their economic and social life. The peasants elected to office in the villages and the districts were subordinated to a huge staff of officials. Measures were carried out to demarcate land boundaries, to grant allotments to peasants with little land and resettle them, to set up mutual aid funds, etc. The tsarist officials continued to oppress and plunder the peasants, whose condition was but little improved by Kiselyov's reforms.

**The Economic Policy of Nicholas I.** The development of trade and industry was also fostered by the economic policy of Nicholas I. While striving to preserve the dictatorship of the feudal landlords inviolate, he was compelled at the same time to support and conciliate the merchants and the manufacturers. This policy was dictated by the need to improve the country's economic and financial position. The government supported commerce and industry by protective and prohibitive tariffs. A tariff law was introduced in 1822 prohibiting the import of 3,110 and the export of 21 items. With slight changes this law remained in force during the reign of Nicholas I as well.



St. Petersburg-Moscow railway line, 1851. *Russian print*

Special educational institutions, among them an Institute of Technology and a Timber Institute, were founded to meet the demands of industry for trained personnel. From time to time industrial exhibitions were organized. In 1851 Russian manufactures were sent for the first time to a world exhibition held in London.

To stabilize the exchange value of the Russian ruble Finance Minister Kankrin carried through a reform restoring the circulation of metal currency in the country. In the first half of the 19th century a tremendous quantity of paper assignats had been issued, and the paper ruble was barely equal to a quarter of the value of the silver ruble. The government redeemed the depreciated assignats and after withdrawing them from circulation established a new monetary unit, the silver ruble. New treasury notes were issued which were exchanged for the silver rubles at face value.

In the interests of industry and trade the government began to develop transport and improve the roads. The first railroad, running from St. Petersburg to Tsarskoye Selo (now the town of Pushkin), was built in 1837. The rails, locomotives and all the equipment were imported from England. The first railroad of economic significance was the line between St. Petersburg and Moscow (now the October Line). It took nine years to build and was opened in 1851. By 1855 the total length of the Russian railroads was 980 versts, which was one-fifth of the French and one-sixth of the German mileage. The government also made an attempt to utilize waterways. In the 'forties freight shipping began to develop on the Volga, and in the following decade a passenger service. By the middle of the century 20 steamships were plying the Volga. The first shipyard for building steam vessels was established in this period.

**The Technical and Economic Backwardness of Tsarist Russia.** Tsarist Russia increasingly lagged behind the advanced countries of Western Europe in technical and economic development. This backwardness becomes particularly manifest when Russia's economic development is compared with that of England. The policy pursued by tsarism tended to increase the country's technical-economic backwardness and retarded its cultural and sociopolitical development.

At the end of the 18th century Russia and England were producing an equal amount of pig iron—8,000,000 poods a year. During the first half of the 19th century Russia doubled output to 16,000,000 poods, while England increased her pig iron production by almost 30 times, turning out 234,000,000 poods in 1859. By the middle 'fifties England was producing 15 times as much pig iron as Russia, and France three times as much. Other branches of Russian industry, as well as commerce and rail and water transport lagged similarly behind Western Europe. The basic Russian industries did not use

machinery and employed serf labour. Production technique was extremely backward at the iron works in the Urals.

This constantly increasing backwardness paved the way to the inevitable catastrophe of feudal Russia and primarily to a military catastrophe.

### 35. THE MASS MOVEMENT FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION IN THE 'THIRTIES

**The Polish Rising of 1830-1831.** Throughout the first half of the 19th century a relentless struggle was being waged in Russia against serfdom and tsarist autocracy. Nicholas I strove throughout his reign to suppress the two forces which constituted the greatest danger to him: the peasant uprisings within the country and the bourgeois revolution in Europe.

A new upsurge of the bourgeois revolution in Europe was called forth by the victory of the July revolution of 1830 in France. When Nicholas learned of the July revolution he ordered an army of 250,000 to be prepared for a campaign against France. France was saved from tsarist intervention by an uprising which broke out in Poland.

In the late twenties of the 19th century students of a school for ensigns had organized a secret society in Warsaw. Inspired by the ideas of the French revolution of 1830 and hoping to receive help from it, they rose in rebellion in November 1830. Warsaw was in the hands of the rebels who had seized the arsenal and armed the population of the city.

General Chlopicki, a man of very moderate views, became dictator. He belonged to a section of the gentry which held high offices of government in Poland and was opposed to the separation of Poland from Russia. Soon General Chlopicki renounced the title of dictator. A new national government was formed in which were incorporated representatives of the democratic strata of the petty gentry.

A new Diet was convened in December 1830. Its most resolute act was to proclaim the deposition of Nicholas I, who, besides being the emperor of Russia, was, according to the constitution of 1815, king of Poland.

Nicholas sent a large army under General Diebitsch to quell the uprising in Poland. For seven months the Polish army, recruited to a total strength of 100,000 men, successfully beat back the tsarist army. Diebitsch died of the cholera before long, and General Paskevich was sent to Poland with another army.

On August 26, 1831, Paskevich took Warsaw by storm and brutally punished the rebels. Five thousand families of the gentry were exiled to the Caucasus and their lands confiscated, 260 students were forcibly enrolled in the army, and 30 women who had taken part in the uprising were put into a nunnery.



Capture of the prison in Warsaw in 1830 by the rebels.  
*From a drawing by Dietrich*

At the beginning of 1833 General Paskevich, who had been appointed lord lieutenant in Poland, reported to the tsar: "Fear has already been instilled in the country."

The Polish rising of 1830-1831 ended in utter defeat. One of the main reasons for this defeat was that the national movement was not combined with a peasant movement. Since the gentry had not wanted to give the peasants land, they failed to win their support. Writing of the Polish uprising of 1830 Engels said: "In plain language, the uprising of 1830 was neither a national revolution (it excluded three-quarters of Poland) nor a social or political revolution; it changed nothing in the internal position of the people; it was a conservative revolution."\*

The uprising found no support among the masses and was routed. The constitution of 1815 was repealed, the Polish army disbanded, and the University of Warsaw closed down. A strict censorship was introduced and all the works of Polish writers were banned. The leaders of the uprising emigrated abroad to escape persecution.

**The Uprisings in Byelorussia and the Ukraine.** From Poland the uprising spread to Lithuania, Byelorussia and the Ukraine, but nowhere did it assume a mass character.

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\* Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. V, p. 265, Moscow 1929.



The commander of the Russian armies promulgated an ukase promising freedom from serfdom to all who helped the tsarist army fight the insurgents. Peasants believed this promise and began to go over to the side of the tsarist government. The uprisings were crushed here too. The lands of all the nobles who had taken an active part in the uprisings were confiscated, and the order promising emancipation to the peasants was declared illegal.

In the Ukraine the uprising affected only the border area of Kiev and Podolsk gubernias, west of the Dnieper, and only a small number of the Polishized gentry took part in it. The Ukrainian peasants regarded the uprising as the concern of the Ukrainian-Polish gentry and did not support it. Neither did the big Ukrainian and Russian landlords, whose economic interests tsarism fully satisfied.

**The Peasant Movement in the Ukraine.** In the thirties of the 19th century a wide peasant movement developed in the Ukraine, called forth by the growing burden of feudal and colonial oppression. The peasants refused to perform *barshchina* services and other compulsory duties. The peasants' struggle against the landlords and the tsarist authorities was of a particularly stubborn character in Podolia, where it assumed the form of guerilla warfare. An outstanding leader of the peasant movement against the Polish, Ukrainian and Russian landlords was Ustim Karmelyuk.

Karmelyuk was the son of a poor serf. He had worked as a household servant in a manor. Given away into the army for some minor offence, he deserted, and organized a small peasant detachment, which attacked the landlords and rich homesteaders. In 1814 Karmelyuk was caught, received 500 strokes of the ramrod and sent to a disciplinary battalion in the Crimea. Together with four soldiers he again ran away and continued the struggle against the landlords. Arrested again, he was sentenced to death by the tsarist court, the sentence being commuted to ten years' penal servitude. Karmelyuk escaped once more and resumed the struggle in Podolia, where he headed a peasant detachment and destroyed the estates of the landlords.

In the summer of 1827 the landlords again seized Karmelyuk. When the peasants, at the order of the landlords, began to bind him, Karmelyuk turned on them with an impassioned speech: "Why do you not tie them up (the squires)? It is they who oppress you!" He urged the peasants not to bear the yoke of slavery submissively. Seven hundred and fifty peasants were put on trial together with Karmelyuk. Three hundred of them were flogged and sent to Siberia; 180 were given to the army.

In 1830 Karmelyuk escaped from penal servitude in Siberia for the seventh time and again headed the struggle against the landlords. Karmelyuk's amazing popularity among the peasantry helped him to baffle his pursuers. He could find protection and shelter in any hut. In Septem-

ber 1835, during a round-up organized by the landlords to catch Karmelyuk, he was shot down by one of the gentry.

However, the wave of peasant rebellions against the landlords raised by Karmelyuk, did not abate for a long time.

**The Cholera Riots and Mutinies in the Army.** The peasant masses rose against the yoke of serfdom all over Russia. In 1830-1831 a widespread epidemic of cholera broke out in the country. Starting in the Caucasus, it spread to Moscow and Petersburg. Rumours to the effect that the landlords were poisoning the peasants with a deadly poison led to an outbreak of riots. Crowds of people in the villages and the cities attacked the hospitals and not infrequently killed the doctors.

In the summer of 1831 a rebellion broke out among the military settlers of the Novgorod gubernia. As a consequence of this uprising the military settlements were gradually liquidated.

A widespread rebellion of sailors, soldiers, handicraftsmen and "other lowly people" took place in Sevastopol in the summer of 1830. The cause of the uprising was the intolerably oppressive conditions of life in the tsarist army and navy. When the plague broke out in the army in the Caucasus and Bessarabia a strict quarantine was established in the city of Sevastopol and in the navy. No person was allowed to leave his house. A famine broke out in the city. In June 1830 the people, driven to despair, sounded the tocsin and rose in rebellion under the command of a sailor named Timofei Ivanov. The workmen and sailors of the naval crews joined the uprising. The city fell into the hands of the rebels.

Nicholas I put down the Sevastopol "mutineers" with a brutal hand. As many as 1,580 soldiers, sailors and workmen were court-martialled. Every tenth man was sentenced to death; some were sentenced to 3,000 strokes each of the ramrod, which was tantamount to a death sentence; 375 women—the wives and daughters of the sailors and soldiers—were sentenced to penal servitude and exiled.

The peasant movement in the 'thirties spread to 26 gubernias, and was exacerbated by the crop failure, famine and fires which broke out in a number of cities and villages on the Volga. The peasants regarded the landlords and officials as the incendiaries and wreaked their vengeance on them.

The spread of the mass movement was a sign of ever-growing discontent of the masses with serfdom. The chief of the gendarmes, Benken-dorf, reported in alarm to the tsar: "The people are bent on one thing—emancipation." He advised the tsar to make concessions to the peasants. In 1842 an ukase was promulgated which gave the landlords the right to grant their peasants personal freedom but obliged the peasants to render *barshchina* services or pay the landlord *obrok*. The new law changed nothing in the position of the peasantry, who continued to manifest their discontent and to demand emancipation from serf bondage.

The number of outbreaks steadily increased: in 1826-1834 there were 145, while in 1845-54 they rose to 348. The peasants fled in increasing numbers, sometimes in whole villages, to the outlying districts.

### **36. CONQUEST OF THE CAUCASUS AND THE STRUGGLE OF THE MOUNTAINEERS FOR INDEPENDENCE**

**The Conquest of the Caucasus.** After the victorious outcome of the war with Napoleon in 1812 tsarist Russia entered upon the conquest of the Northern Caucasus. In 1816 A. P. Yermolov was appointed as chief in command of the Caucasus, where he applied military and administrative measures of a very drastic nature.

Military fortifications were set up during 1817-1821 throughout the Eastern and Western Caucasus with such awe-inspiring names as "The Dread," "The Wicked Trench," etc.

These served as a base for Yermolov's incessant military expeditions against the mountain population who were forced into submission by means of arms and hunger. Yermolov ordered forests to be cut down, and clearings made, avowing that the axe would play no less an important role than the rifle and bayonet in pacifying the region.

Tsarist Russia's venture at the systematic conquest of the Caucasus was fraught with the most serious foreign political complications.

**Wars with Persia (1826-1828) and Turkey (1827-1829).** England and France had repeatedly tried to incite Persia and Turkey to hostilities against Russia.

In the summer of 1826 a war broke out between Russia and Persia. Persian troops occupied Azerbaijan and marched on Daghestan and Chechen. Paskevich, appointed commander of the Caucasian army in the spring of 1827, defeated the Persians. The war with Persia ended in the winter of 1828 with the signing of the Turkmanchai Treaty by which Persia ceded Nakhichevan and Erivan, i.e., a considerable part of Armenia, to Russia.

Russia waged a simultaneous war for Caucasian lands against Turkey (1827-1829). Nicholas I strove not only to consolidate Russia's hold over Transcaucasia but also to seize Constantinople and the straits. In 1827 the Russian fleet defeated the Turkish squadron at Navarino Bay (off the Morea Peninsula). In 1828 tsarist troops, with Constantinople as their objective, occupied Moldavia and Walachia, crossed the Balkans and seized Adrianople. Here, in 1829 was signed a peace treaty which gave Russia the entire Caucasian seaboard, with the exception of Batum. Turkey was forced to recognize all tsarist conquests in Transcaucasia.

Having thus won a free hand, Russian tsarism decided to complete the subjugation of the Caucasus. Paskevich, the commander-

in-chief in the Caucasus, received orders from Nicholas I to "pacify the mountaineer peoples for all time or exterminate those who would not submit."

**The Mountaineers of the Caucasus in Their Struggle for Independence.** Russian tsarism in the Northern Caucasus found itself confronted with a small and scattered population.

The mass of the Chechen population consisted of independent, free villagers—the *uzdens*, besides whom there were also slaves. The landless and impoverished *uzdens* (peasants) and slaves were exploited by the tribal aristocracy and the clergy who had seized the communal lands and acquired large herds of sheep. Conflicts frequently arose among the population over land lots and pasturages. All disputes and litigation were settled by common law—the *adat*.

Daghestan, lying adjacent to North Caucasus, was also divided into petty semi-feudal and feudal domains, the largest of which were located on the seaboard. The dominant element were the khans and begs (princes), upon whom the *uzdens* were dependent. The begs also owned slaves. With the conquest of the Caucasus by tsarism the khans and begs entered the Russian service, and under the protection of the tsarist army, usurped the lands of the tribal communities and reduced the *uzdens* to bondage. The latter were compelled to render feudal services to their lords and supply them with various products. The tsarist generals, supported by the begs and the khans, ruthlessly exploited and exterminated the mountain people.

Roused by these persecutions, the mountaineers in the late twenties of the 19th century, rose in a struggle for their independence against Russian tsarism and its myrmidons—the khans and begs.

Colonial oppression by tsarism led to a number of spontaneous uprisings among the mountaineers.

In 1818 most of the villages of Daghestan rose in rebellion. Numer-



A feudal lord of Imeretia.  
From a drawing by K. P. Begrov

ous guerilla detachments in Chechen were led by Bey-Bulat who succeeded in mustering a large force and proclaimed a holy war against Russian tsarism. In 1826 the rebel detachments of Bey-Bulat were defeated, and he himself was killed by Russian agents.

At the end of the 'twenties the freedom-loving mountaineers began to unite for a struggle for their independence. This movement was led until 1832 by an *imam* (a Mohammedan priest) Kazi-Mullah, who preached a religious doctrine known as *muridism*. Until the conquest of the Caucasus by the Russians, *muridism* had been a kind of religious order or fraternity in Islam, which widely preached the doctrine of "moral perfection and renunciation of earthly blessings." At the end of the 'twenties *muridism* assumed a political character, its chief tenet now being proclaimed the holy war. Under this banner Kazi-Mullah mustered thousands of *murids* whom he led against the detachments of the tsarist army and the local khans and begs in the service of the Russian generals. His disciple and follower was Shamyl.

**The Struggle of the Mountaineers for Independence under the Leadership of Shamyl (1834-1859).** After Bey-Bulat was killed Shamyl became leader of the mountaineers in their struggle for independence. Shamyl was born in the family of a well-to-do hillman. While still a boy, Shamyl made a serious study of the works of Mohammedan writers. His teacher and friend—*imam* Kazi-Mullah exercised a great influence over him. After the latter's death the Daghestan *murids* chose Shamyl in 1834 as their secular and spiritual ruler—the *imam* and leader of the holy war.

Shamyl was an outstanding political leader and brave captain. His secretary describes him in the following words: "Shamyl was a learned, pious, and shrewd man, courageous, resolute and at the same time unrivalled as a horseman, marksman, swimmer and runner. He well knew his people and his native Daghestan when still under the tutelage of Kazi-Mullah. There was not a design which he was not capable of putting into execution."

Shamyl was a fine orator. It was said that his speeches always produced the effect he meant them to have. But above all Shamyl revealed himself as a talented organizer of the mountaineers' state and military leader in the struggle against tsarist colonizers.

Shamyl intrenched himself in his military residence of Akhulgo, in Daghestan, where Russian and Polish fugitive soldiers had built him a house in the European style. A large military force was sent out against him and after a siege of three months Shamyl lost almost all his best men, while he himself made good his escape by a miracle of fortitude and perilous adventures.

In August 1839 Shamyl withdrew into the mountain fastnesses of Chechen. In the beginning of the 'forties, Shamyl, supported by the



An aul in Daghestan. From a drawing by G. G. Gagarin

mass movement of the mountaineers of Chechen and Daghestan, won a number of important victories over the Russian troops. Shamyl's fame resounded throughout the Caucasus. Nicholas I appointed a new commander of the troops in the Caucasus, M. S. Vorontsov, of whom he demanded that he "rout, if possible, the bands of Shamyl, penetrate into the heart of his domains and intrench there."

Vorontsov's military expedition at the head of a large army, suffered defeat at the hands of Shamyl, and Vorontsov himself barely escaped being taken prisoner.

Realizing that the scattered tribes of mountaineers could not attain victory unless they were united, Shamyl applied himself to this task by setting up an independent state on the territory which was in their hands. The state was headed by Shamyl himself, who wielded full political and military power.

Each region was placed in the care of Shamyl's lieutenants, called *naibs*, and a civil and ecclesiastical authority was set up in every region. The power of the begs and khans was everywhere dissolved.

Shamyl ordered the *naibs* to form infantry and cavalry units. All who distinguished themselves received awards of arms, horses and money, as well as medals and stripes on their turbans. Stripes were also sewn on for cowardice in battle—bits of felt on the back or on the right arm. These marks of disgrace were removed as soon as the wearer had vindicated his reputation by an act of bravery.

Shamyl formed a small artillery, and even organized the casting of guns. The mountaineers called them the "thousand warriors." The guns were made from iron scrap by a blacksmith named Jabrail, and proved on test to pass muster, though the first one had exploded. The mountaineers also used grenades which they had captured from the Russian soldiers. Shamyl organized the production of gunpowder, but shared it out only to the *murids* and the most practised shots. Skilled workmen—fugitive Russian soldiers—acted as instructors and helped Shamyl to organize the production of arms. For the purpose of conducting war, Shamyl put the finances in order, created a single state treasury, organized the proper collection of taxes, encouraged trade, granted various privileges to the merchants and stimulated handicraft. The native blacksmiths, gunmakers, carpenters and other handicraftsmen went through a course of training under Russian and Polish soldiers who had deserted and come over to Shamyl. Shamyl freed a considerable part of the slaves. The nucleus of the new state were the *murids* who, in the capacity of spiritual and political advisers, directed all the affairs of the country. Shamyl's activities were of a democratic, progressive nature, being directed at this period against both tsarism and the local feudal lords.

But after the successes achieved during 1840-1845 Shamyl's state experienced great internal difficulties. The country was economically

at a very low ebb. Shamyl's lieutenants, the *naibs*, imposed heavy taxes on the population. The mountain peasantry, particularly in Chechen, began to murmur. The ranks of Shamyl's army began to thin. The *naibs* and the *murids*, who had grown rich, ever more frequently went over to the tsarist troops. In combating Shamyl the Russian generals had now changed their tactics. Instead of attacking the refractory mountain villages, they now began to cut down the woods, lay out convenient roads for the troops, build forts and invest the villages, breaking the mountaineers' resistance by starvation.

In 1859 Shamyl, with a small detachment of *murids* and one gun, put up a brave resistance against the Russians in his last stronghold—the fortress of Gunib in Daghestan.

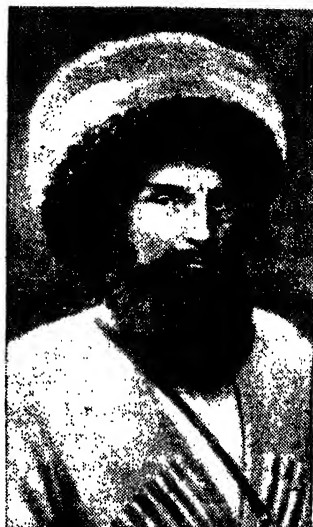
On August 25, 1859, the commander-in-chief of the Caucasian army sent in his report: "Gunib has fallen, Shamyl taken captive." The captive Shamyl was sent to Petersburg and then settled in Kaluga. Shamyl died at Medina during a pilgrimage on which he set out a year before with the permission of the tsarist government.

**The Struggle of the Mountaineers of Western Caucasus for Their Independence.** After the defeat of Shamyl, tsarism sent military forces to subdue the Western Caucasus, the Kuban and the Black Sea coast from Anapa to Sukhum. The struggle in the Western Caucasus against Russian tsarism was headed by Shamyl's assistant—Mohammed-Emmin. After Shamyl had been taken prisoner, tsarism threw its troops against Mohammed-Emmin who was compelled to surrender.

In November 1859 most of the villages of Western Caucasus were burnt down and pillaged. The Caucasian tribes were dispossessed of the best lands.

In the beginning of the 'sixties the warlike tribes of the Northwestern Caucasus were everywhere driven out of their strongholds.

The local urban population was driven out of the Northwestern Caucasus. From 1858 to 1864 about 400,000 mountaineers were thus evacuated. The mountaineers sold their cattle and belongings for a song and migrated to Turkey. As their boats pulled out of their native shores the mountaineers fired their rifles in a farewell salute.



Shamyl



The tsarist government resettled Russian peasants and Cossacks in the Northern Caucasus, allotting to them the lands that had belonged to the mountaineers. "The policy of tsarism, the policy of the landlords and the bourgeoisie," wrote J. V. Stalin, "was to settle these parts with the greatest possible number of kulaks from among the Russian peasants and the Cossacks, and to make the latter a reliable basis for Great-Power ambitions."\*

### 37. THE PEOPLES OF CENTRAL ASIA AND THE ADVANCE OF TSARISM IN KAZAKHSTAN AND CENTRAL ASIA

**Central Asiatic Khanates.** The formation of the three Central Asiatic khanates of Bokhara, Khiva and Kokand, at the end of the 18th century, was an important step towards the political unification of the numerous warring feudal independencies of Central Asia. The three khanates ruled over the Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kirghiz and a section of the Turkomans. A considerable part of Turkmenia was considered to be under the sovereignty of Persia. The nomad economy of the Turkomans lacked a stable fodder base and adequate water supply. The Turkomans were frequently driven by dire poverty to make raids on the settlements of Bokhara, Afghanistan and Persia. The tribal aristocracy, who provided themselves with the best lands and irrigation canals, exploited the population of Turkmenia.

The greater part of present-day Tajikistan had also, at the beginning of the 19th century, retained its formal independence and was administered by local rulers.

The khanates of Central Asia waged constant war with the object of conquering the neighbouring lands. The greatest expansion was achieved by the Kokand khanate, which, at the beginning of the 19th century had conquered Tashkent, an important trading and strategic centre in Central Asia. The possession of Tashkent enabled Kokand to reduce the surrounding steppe regions of Kazakhstan and Kirghizia.

In order to consolidate their power, the khans of Kokand studded the south Kazakh districts and Kirghizia with fortresses, built mosques and *madrasas* (Mussulman universities), and implanted Mussulman education. Trading and urban settlements of handicraftsmen grew up around the fortresses: Ak-Mechet, Auliye-Ata, Pishpek and others. In the thirties of the 19th century the Kokand khanate was the largest state in Central Asia, stretching from the foothills of the Pamir to the Lower Syr Darya and Western China.

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\* Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, Eng. ed., p. 84, Moscow 1940.

By subjecting the neighbouring lands of the Kazakhs, Turkomans and Karakalpaki, the Khiva khanate too considerably extended its frontiers in the beginning of the 19th century. The Khiva feudal lords adroitly fomented inter-tribal feuds among the Turkomans. The borders of the Bokhara khanate, on the contrary, contracted in the first decade of the 19th century, as a result of the aggrandizement of the Kokand and Khiva khanates.

Turkestan, which had been under the protection of Bokhara, and many fortresses passed over to Kokand. Some Turkoman domains passed over to Khiva. In spite of its political weakness, Bokhara still continued to play a prominent economic role in the middle of the 19th century. The mass of the handicraftsmen lived in Bokhara, and their cotton and silk wares competed successfully with all other cities.

The class structure and administration of the various khanates were similar. They were headed by the Uzbek feudal lords and the higher Mussulman clergy. The latter did not cultivate their lands but leased them out to peasants on share-cropping terms. The main producers were the peasants who engaged in agriculture and cattle raising. Water supply, without which land in Central Asia is valueless, played an exceptional role in the economy. If any one irrigated former "dead" lands, these lands became his property.

**The Kazakhs in the Second Quarter of the 19th Century.** The territory of modern Kazakhstan was inhabited in the first half of the 19th century by three states, known as the Small, Medium and Great Hordes.

The Small and Medium Hordes had become subjects of Russia in the first half of the 18th century, and the colonization of this region began in the twenties of the 19th century. Tsarism founded a number of forts in the Kazakh steppes as a means of keeping the Kazakhs in subordination, and commencing its conquest of the states of Central Asia.

In 1835-1837 V.A. Perovsky, governor-general of Orenburg, started the construction of a line of forts between Orsk and Troitsk, alienating for this purpose an area of 10,000 sq. km. rich in pastures, rivers and forests. The Kazakhs were pushed out to poorer lands, and the right to graze in the districts of the fort area was restricted. This created bitter feeling among the Kazakhs, who began to prepare for an armed struggle against the tsarist colonizers.

To reduce the resistance of the Kazakh people, tsarism had, during the reign of Paul I, carved out of the Small Horde the pastoral lands of Bukey Khan and founded a separate Bukey khanate, subordinate to tsarist Russia. Part of the Caspian coast where the pastoral lands of the Kazakhs of the Bukey khanate were located, were proclaimed the property of Russian landlords. The latter exacted exorbitant rents from the Kazakhs for the use of the pasture lands.

The increased burden of taxation and exploitation by the elders who were appointed by the khan and supported by tsarism, and the usurpation of lands by the khans and the sultans, led to a widespread popular uprising that began in 1836. Its leaders were the elders—Batyra Isatai Taimanov and the minstrel (*akym*) Makhambet Utemisov. They besieged the headquarters of the khan, burnt much property belonging to the sultans, and turned over their pastoral lands to the needy Kazakhs. The uprising bore the character of a peasant war directed simultaneously against tsarism and its colonial policy. It was suppressed by the joint efforts of the khans, sultans and the tsarist authorities.

A protracted struggle of the Kazakh people broke out at this time against tsarism in the Medium Horde. The construction of new forts, the seizure of lands for Russian Cossack settlements, curtailment of pasture lands and the introduction of a new system of administration in 1822, aroused universal discontent among the Kazakhs. The Kazakh people, headed by sultan Kenesari Kasymov and his intrepid Captain Naurazbey, rose in defence of their independence. Kenesari was elected khan by all the Kazakh Hordes, and he aspired to unite the Kazakhs and create an independent Kazakh khanate. As a result of the national movement of the Kazakh people for liberation, tsarism was compelled to mitigate the system of administration.

In 1845 Russian tsarism built new fortifications in the heart of the Kazakh steppes. Kenesari retreated to the eastern part of the steppes, where he continued his struggle against the tsarist troops advancing toward the River Ili. Shortly afterwards, Kenesari's detachment was surrounded in one of the passes of the Ala-Tau by Kirghiz *manaps* (feudal lords) who had formed a league with Kokand and tsarism against the Kazakh rebels. Kenesari and Naurazbey were taken prisoners and tortured to death. The names of these heroes and indomitable champions of Kazakh independence still live in the memory of the Kazakh people.

**Preparations for the Conquest of Central Asia.** While engaged in the struggle against Kenesari Kasymov, Russian tsarism was also making preparations for the conquest of the Central Asiatic khanates. Its object was to use the Kazakh steppes as a base from which to embark on the conquest of Central Asia, the possession of which as a colony of Russia had long been tsarism's cherished plan.

Governor-general Perovsky formed a small army, reinforced with Cossack, Bashkirian and Kazakh cavalry, with which he set out from Orenburg in the autumn of 1839 on a campaign against Khiva. Fifteen thousand camels accompanied the detachment through the desert steppes carrying provisions and water for the expedition. However, snow blizzards and severe frosts killed the camels and the horses, and Perovsky, after suffering heavy losses was compelled to retreat. After

this failure Perovsky began new preparations for an expedition by way of the steppes of Kirghizia. The country was reconnoitred for roads, wells were sunk, and fortifications built. Fort Aralsk was put up on the River Syr Darya. It was soon to become the centre of a large Russian agricultural colony on the shores of the Aral Sea, on which a steamboat flotilla was built. Regular communication was established between Orenburg and the Aral Sea.

In the spring of 1853 Perovsky moved upstream with a large force, and crossed into the domains of the khan of Kokand. He besieged the Kokand fortress of Ak-Mechet, killed off all its defenders and turned it into a Russian fortress called Perovsk. Perovsky built five new forts on the Syr Darya, the so-called Syr Darya Line. The tsarist troops seized the cities of Pishpek, Tokmak and others. These cities (in the Chuisk Valley of Kirghizia) belonged to the khanate of Kokand, and were inhabited by Kirghiz. However, Kirghizia, a mountainous land difficult of access, was not completely subjugated by tsarist Russia until the 'seventies.

Kazakhstan, too, was being methodically reduced. In 1854 the fort of Vernoye, later known as the city of Verny (now Alma-Ata), was founded.

In 1854 Perovsky set out against Khiva from his base on the Syr Darya, but the khan of Khiva sent his envoys to the Russian camp and concluded a treaty, recognizing the supremacy of Russia and granting her privileges in the trade with Khiva.

Thus, by the end of the 'fifties a continuous line of fortifications had been erected from Syr Darya to Semipalatinsk. The Kazakh and Kirghiz steppes fell completely under the sway of tsarism.

The complete subjection of the Central Asiatic khanates of Khiva, Kokand and Bokhara was now only a question of time.

## *Chapter IX*

# TSARISM—THE GENDARME OF EUROPE

## 38. THE FOREIGN POLICY OF NICHOLAS I

**The Eastern Question.** The rebellion of the Decembrists, which Nicholas I attributed chiefly to the influence of the revolutions in Europe, induced the tsar from the very first days of his reign to reject the cautious, ambiguous and dilatory policy of Alexander I and to proclaim "new principles" of the imperial foreign policy based on: energy, resolution, drive. The aims of Nicholas I's foreign policy were essentially the same as those of Alexander I, but his immediate object

was to establish the supremacy of tsarist Russia in the Near East. Russia, being the leading power in the Black Sea, was interested in the unrestricted use of the straits which were the sole gates to the Black Sea, and the establishment in them of such a regime as would not allow states hostile to Russia to use them for attacking Russian domains in the Black Sea region. But Russia had powerful opponents in the Near East: England, France and Austria. Austria's aim was to secure control of shipping on the Danube and obtain an economic foothold in the northwestern part of the Balkan Peninsula (in the Turkish provinces of Moldavia and Walachia). France strove to wrest Egypt from Turkey, while England's aim was to reduce Turkey to a semi-colony and use her as a barrier against Russian advance to the Mediterranean and the East. England and France therefore strove to gain control over the straits.

Thus there arose in the Near East a bloc of rival powers (England, France and Austria), all supporting Turkey against Russia. Russia's increasing economic and technical backwardness enabled a more advanced country like England to steadily crowd its feudal rival out of the markets. In the 'twenties England succeeded in destroying Russia's trade monopoly in the northern part of the Pacific. While Russia was waging war against Turkey and Persia for possession of Transcaucasia, England was busy undermining Russia's position. England was particularly jealous of Russia's claims in Asia. The Near and Middle East thus became the major issues of international antagonisms and the source of fierce political contention between tsarist Russia and her rivals.

In the early years of his reign Nicholas I tried to consolidate his influence in the Balkan Peninsula by espousing the cause of Greek independence against Turkey.

Tsarism, however, was frustrated by England who by aid of her ties with the Greek bourgeoisie and loans to the Greek government snatched Greece out from under Russian influence.

During the wars with Persia (1826-1828) and Turkey (1827-1829), tsarist Russia regained its influence in the Near East.

The treaties of Turkmanchai and Adrianople were the culmination of Nicholas I's foreign policy. The treaty concluded in 1828 at Turkmanchai between Russia and Persia, enabled Russia to consolidate her position on the Caspian Sea.

Fearing the increase of Russian influence in Persia and throughout the Near East, England did her best to frustrate it. Within a year an uprising, which was actively supported by the English residents in Teheran, broke out against Russia during which almost the entire Russian mission, including the ambassador and poet, A. S. Griboyedov, were killed.

The Treaty of Adrianople concluded with Turkey in 1829 was favourable to Russia. The Bosphorus and the Dardanelles were proclaimed free to Russian and foreign mercantile marine. The right of Russian

subjects to trade freely within the Ottoman empire (Turkey) was recognized. Greece, Serbia, Moldavia and Walachia were granted extensive autonomous rights. As a matter of fact the Danubian principalities were occupied by the Russian army. The European powers, particularly England, could not reconcile themselves to the idea of Russian supremacy in Turkey.

Turkey's position became more complicated when the Pasha of Egypt, Mehemet Ali, with the support of France, began a war with her. The sultan of Turkey appealed for assistance to Nicholas I.

A Russian squadron under Admiral Lazarev left Sevastopol for the shores of Turkey. In February 1833 Russian warships entered the Bosphorus.

Alarmed by this new development, England and France hastened to restore peace between the recent enemies—the Turkish sultan and the Egyptian Pasha—and demanded the withdrawal of the Russian squadron from Turkish waters.

In her endeavours to secure the annulment of the treaties which gave Russia considerable advantages in the Balkans, England convened a conference of the interested powers in London in the summer of 1840, at which an agreement was signed on the question of Turkey between England, Austria, Prussia and Russia. The London Convention took Turkey under the "collective protection" of the four signatory powers. Tsarist Russia was compelled to abandon her dominant position in Turkey.

The growing revolutionary movement in Europe again enhanced tsarism's leading role in international politics. All the governments of Europe sought help and protection against revolution from the "gendarme of Europe"—Nicholas I.

In the autumn of 1833 Austria, Russia and Prussia concluded an alliance of mutual aid in the event of foreign aggression or of revolution. This virtually signified a revival of the "Holy Alliance" by three feudal monarchs of Europe against the bourgeois revolution. When an armed uprising of Polish revolutionaries broke out in Cracow in 1846, Austria and Russia sent troops to Cracow and crushed the rebellion. But in February 1848 a revolution which began in France quickly assumed a widespread European character.

### 39. THE REVOLUTION OF 1848 IN EUROPE AND RUSSIAN INTERVENTION IN HUNGARY

**The Leaders of the World Proletariat, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.** The first independent action to be undertaken by the working class of Europe (the uprisings of the weavers of Lyons, France, in 1831 and 1834, and Chartism in England in the first half of the 19th century) ended in failure. The first civil war between the

working class and the bourgeoisie in the summer of 1848 in Paris likewise ended in the defeat of the proletariat. The working class at this period was everywhere still young, and badly organized. In Russia both the working class movement and capitalist industry were in their infancy. However, the birth of a new social class—the proletariat—ushered in a new and important epoch in human history. The leaders of the proletariat in the middle of the 19th century were Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

Marx was born on May 5, 1818 in Germany, in the town of Treves in the province of the Rhine. Engels was born on November 28, 1820, in the town of Barmen, in the same province. The two great proletarian revolutionaries first met in 1844, since when, for almost 40 years, they worked hand in hand for the liberation of the workers and toilers of the whole world.

Marx and Engels, the great teachers of the working class, discovered the world-historical role of the proletariat as the creator of Communist society. In 1847 Marx and Engels organized the first Communist Party—*The Communist League*. Under their leadership proletarian parties were organized in various countries which directed the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. In 1847-1848 Marx and Engels drafted the program of the international party of the proletariat—*The Manifesto of the Communist Party*. The basic idea underlying the manifesto of scientific Communism consists in the inevitability of the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat for a struggle for the abolition of classes and for the building up of a classless, Communist society. The Manifesto concludes with the appeal: "Working men of all countries, unite!"

**The Revolution of 1848 and Nicholas I.** News of the revolution in Paris in February 1848 reached Nicholas I during a court ball. Fuming with rage at these tidings, the gendarme of Europe turned to his courtiers and said: "Saddle your horses, gentlemen; there is a revolution in Paris."

Nicholas I helped the Austrian reaction crush the revolution of 1848 in Vienna. He gave Austria 6 million rubles to combat the national liberation movement in Italy. Nicholas I opposed the unification of disunited Germany, which was demanded by the progressive German bourgeoisie.

After the defeat of the Paris workers in June 1848 there remained in Europe a single revolutionary centre upon which all the revolutionary forces of Europe, particularly of Poland, based their hopes. This was revolutionary Hungary which had broken away from Austria. Nicholas I decided to stifle this last bulwark of the European bourgeois revolution as well. The existence of an independent democratic Hungary constituted a threat to the interests of tsarism on the Danube and

in the Balkans, and was moreover a potential source of revolution in Eastern Europe.

The revolution in Hungary had the character of a national liberation movement. Liberated Hungary was proclaimed an independent state. The leader of the Hungarian people's struggle was Lajos Kossuth, whom Marx described as a "truly revolutionary character," who had launched a desperate struggle against the whole of reactionary Europe for the salvation of his people. Nicholas I sent Paskevich, the suppressor of Poland and the Caucasus, against little Hungary with an army of 140,000. In his instructions to Paskevich, Nicholas wrote: "Show no mercy to the scoundrels." Surrounded by Austrian and Russian troops the Hungarian army of 23,000 was compelled to surrender (1849).

The defeat of Hungary signified the triumph of feudal-monarchic, military reaction in Europe. It also signified that the Russian tsar had become the decisive factor in European politics. With his help counter-revolution was victorious in Prussia, Austria and France.

Marx and Engels, who had returned to Germany during the revolution of 1848, indefatigably roused all the revolutionary and democratic forces of Europe against Russian tsarism, since the European revolution could not succeed unless the feudal monarchy of Russia was destroyed.

The defeat of Hungary by tsarist Russia and suppression of the last hearth of bourgeois-democratic revolution in Europe, Marx and Engels regarded as an event no less decisive for Eastern and Central Europe (i.e., for Russia, Poland, Austria, Italy and Germany), than were the June battles in Paris for the West.

#### 40. THE CRIMEAN WAR

**The International Situation on the Eve of the War.** The triumph of European reaction, strengthening as it did the role of tsarism in international politics, impelled Nicholas I to avail himself of this favourable opportunity for restoring his lost positions in the Near East.

Capitalist England, bent at all costs on gaining a strong footing in the Near and Middle East, could not suffer Russian enhancement in the Balkans, or agree to her control of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, those gateways to the eastern markets. The Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, as Marx said, were "military positions of first rank." In the hands of Russia they would have constituted a threat to England's sea supremacy.

The French bourgeoisie, which had long been a rival of Russia in Constantinople, was also afraid of Russian influence in the Near East. In the middle of the 19th century Turkey had become increasingly dependent upon French loans and French military aid. France made it



known that in the event of Moldavia and Walachia being invaded by the Russian troops, she was prepared to go to war.

Nicholas I counted on the support of his old allies, the Austrian emperor and the Prussian king, whom he had rendered considerable assistance in their struggle against the revolution of 1848-1849. But Austria was resolved not to allow Russia to occupy the Danubian principalities, since that would jeopardize her own trade on the Danube.

Prussia, resentful of tsarist opposition to the unification of Germany, likewise expressed no desire to help tsarism. The Russian tsar had still another opponent—European democracy—which regarded Russian tsarism as an international gendarme, and the main obstacle on the path of European progress.

Such was the international situation on the eve of the Crimean War.

**The Progress and Character of the Crimean War (1853-1856).** The question of the "Holy Places" in Palestine (Palestine belonged to Turkey) served as a pretext for a new military conflict between Russia and Turkey. Early in 1853 an Extraordinary Embassy was sent from St. Petersburg to Constantinople which demanded that the sultan grant the Orthodox church the right to the keys of the Bethlehem Temple in Palestine, which according to the treaty between Turkey and France, had formerly been the prerogative of the Catholics. The sultan, counting on the support of France and Great Britain, rejected Russia's ultimatum. Diplomatic relations between Russia and Turkey were broken off. In June 1853 a Russian army of 80,000 men entered Moldavia and Walachia.

Representatives of the great powers called a conference in Vienna to settle the "eastern crisis." Turkey, backed by Great Britain, refused to enter into negotiations unless the Russian troops were first withdrawn from the Danubian principalities. This demand not being conceded to, the Turkish army began its offensive on the Danube, on the frontiers of Asia and the Caucasian coast.

The first big engagement took place off the southern shores of the Black Sea, at Sinope. In November 1853 Admiral Nakhimov's squadron attacked and destroyed a Turkish squadron caught unawares in the harbour. Turkish admirals and officers were made prisoners. The battle of Sinope displayed the high naval skill of Admiral Nakhimov. The destruction of the Turkish fleet precipitated Britain's and France's intervention in the conflict. The combined British and French fleets entered the Black Sea with the object of preventing further operations by the Russian fleet. Prussia and Austria refused Russia their support. Tsarist Russia was left to fight alone against Turkey, Great Britain and France, as well as Sardinia who had joined them. At the demand of Austria, tsarism was obliged to withdraw from the Danubian principalities in the summer of 1854.

The allied fleet bombarded Odessa on April 1, 1854, and in the summer they seized the Aland Islands, opened fire on the Solovetsk Monastery in the White Sea and even bombarded Petropavlovsk in Kamchatka. But all these operations were merely in the nature of military demonstrations. The English bourgeoisie, fearing the growth of European revolution in the event of "Europe's gendarme" being done away with, did not desire the complete defeat of tsarism. The strategic plans of Great Britain and France were therefore not calculated to be too far-reaching. The allies tried to localize the conflict, and, indeed, the Eastern War was soon concentrated, for the most part, on the Crimean front. By its very nature the Eastern, or Crimean, War waged by tsarism was an unjust war, a war of conquest. No less unjust and predatory was it on the part of Great Britain and France. The Crimean War demonstrated once more to all the world the bravery of the Russian soldier, the heroism and self-sacrifice of the Russian people.

**The Defence of Sevastopol.** Sevastopol, a sea fortress and naval base, Russia's bulwark on the Black Sea, was the immediate object of the allies' attack. At the beginning of September 1854 the Anglo-French fleet landed troops at Eupatoria in order to take Sevastopol from the north. Not meeting any resistance, the British, French and Turkish army of 62,000 moved along the coast to Sevastopol. The Russian troops tried to bar the way of the allied army, and engaged it in battle at the River Alma. The Russians, who had less than half the enemy's strength in men and artillery, made such fierce onslaughts and bayonet charges that the British, though the field was theirs, suffered very heavy losses. "Another victory like that and England will have no army," one of the British commanders was compelled to admit. After the defeat at the Alma, the road to Sevastopol lay open. But the further advance of the Anglo-French troops was checked by an outbreak of cholera in the army.

The defenders of Sevastopol utilized this time to fortify the city.

The Black Sea sailing fleet could not engage the allied steam fleet, and it was therefore sunk at the mouth of Sevastopol harbour, thus blocking the way to the allied fleet. The garrison of Sevastopol was reinforced by the naval crews and gunners of the Black Sea fleet.

The Russian Defence Chief, Admiral Kornilov, and his immediate assistants, Vice-Admiral Nakhimov and Rear-Admiral Istomin, displayed extraordinary energy and bravery during the defence of Sevastopol. Thanks to the initiative and inventiveness of the talented engineer Todleben, Sevastopol was transformed into a formidable fortress. The entire population came out to defend the city. In two weeks Sevastopol was belted by menacing bastions and redoubts. All the population of the fortress was mobilized for the work. Armed with picks and spades, thousands of people dug trenches day and night, and carried sand and earth in sacks and baskets under fire, in order to reinforce the

weaker spots. On arriving at Sevastopol, the enemy army, which had counted on swiftly taking the fortress by storm was confronted by a powerful line of defence works. Doubting the feasibility of taking it by storm, the Anglo-French troops skirted Sevastopol from the north and broke camp in the southeast, occupying Balaklava and the Fedyukhin Heights. Instead of storming the positions they were compelled to settle down to a long siege.

Thus began the eleven months' heroic defence of Sevastopol. The army in the field was meanwhile repulsing the attacks of the Anglo-French troops in battles at Balaklava, Inkerman and the River Chernaya. In February 1855 Nicholas I died. The Crimean army was in a very serious position. In the spring of 1855 the new commander of the French army decided to cut off the food supplies for the Russian army coming from the Azov Sea. With this in view the allied squadron entered the Azov Sea and devastated the coast.

The brave soldiers and sailors meanwhile defended Sevastopol heroically. Malakhov Kurgan was the key position of the fortress. The defenders of Sevastopol repelled several assaults of the enemy, but the conditions for the defence of the fortress were very hard. The enemy bombarded the city from land and sea with 1,800 guns. Under a deadly rain of bombs, grapeshot, rockets and shells the garrison answered energetically and with telling effect, although they had only 118 guns. The ruined positions were immediately restored. The men and officers displayed amazing fearlessness and stubborn loyalty. Kornilov died the death of the brave during those days.

The bombardment failing to achieve its aims, the enemy directed all their efforts to creating new lines of offensive positions which were to belt Sevastopol and grip it in an iron ring.

Bad weather set in with the winter. Heavy rains had turned the ground into a mire. The Russian soldiers in their light uniforms suffered greatly from cold. There was a shortage of ammunition, and food supplies and fodder arrived at irregular intervals. The wounded died for lack of medical aid and medicines. Despite all these hardships the spirit of the defenders did not fall, and they continued manfully to resist their assailants. The streets of the city were covered with barricades and many of the houses had been turned into strongholds. The soldiers undertook daring night attacks and audacious sorties. At night hundreds of volunteers crept out of the fortress, occupied all the depressions, built shelters and subjected the enemy to a deadly fire. Fierce bayonet fights often took place outside the fortress line. Sailor Koshka, for example, displayed amazing courage. During these eleven weary months of siege, the Russian soldiers displayed an indomitable courage and staunchness, quietly and efficiently performing their duty without murmur or complaint. Among the defenders of Sevastopol was the future great writer Leo Tolstoy. His *Tales of Sevastopol* give a graphic

and faithful picture of the heroic days of the defence of Sevastopol. N. I. Pirogov, the future outstanding Russian scientist, played an active part in Sevastopol in the capacity of surgeon and medical service organizer. Dasha Sevastopolskaya was the first nurse in the world to tend the wounded at the war.

At the beginning of 1855 the fighting was renewed with still greater vigour. In March and May the allies subjected the fortress to terrific new bombardments as a preliminary to an assault of Sevastopol. Having received reinforcements in men and guns, the enemy began to storm Malakhov Kurgan. By means of demolition work, the allied troops were able to approach the Russian fortress at a much shorter range, and shelled Sevastopol from a distance of 150 metres. The besieged fought heroically, losing daily from 500 to 700 men. The best organizers of the defence—Istomin and Nakhimov—were killed one after the other; Todleben was seriously wounded. At the beginning of August the fifth bombardment began and on August 27 (September 8), after a new hurricane of fire, powerful assault forces swarmed up the Malakhov Kurgan. After reducing almost all the fortifications by their artillery fire, the French succeeded in capturing Malakhov Kurgan, all the slopes of which were covered with dead bodies. Though Malakhov Kurgan was taken, the other bastions continued to hold out, until realizing the hopelessness of their position, the garrison moved to the northern side, first blowing up the powder magazines and the city buildings. After a glorious defence of 349 days the defenders of Sevastopol retreated from the city destroying all the military supplies and sinking the last ships of the fleet.

Operations against Turkey on the Caucasian battle front were progressing successfully. The Russian army had taken Kars by storm, thus opening the way to Erzerum. But the Caucasian theatre of war could have no decisive influence on the outcome of the war. The Crimean War was lost.

In February 1856 the International Congress opened in Paris, attended by Russia, Great Britain, France, Austria, Turkey and Sardinia. Great Britain, who held the most irreconcilable position at the congress, demanded that Russia undertake not to restore the military fortresses on the Aland Islands and on the Black Sea, that she destroy the naval arsenal at Nikolayev, and keep no war fleet on the Black or Azov seas. France's position was more conciliatory, since she did not want England to grow more powerful at the expense of Russia.

The peace treaty signed in Paris in 1856 deprived Russia of the right to maintain warships in the Black Sea and fortresses on the coast. The integrity and independence of the Ottoman empire was guaranteed. The former frontier between Russia and Turkey was restored. Serbia, Moldavia and Walachia were placed under the protection of the European powers. The Dardenelles and the Black Sea were declared neutral

and open to the commercial flags of all countries. Tsarist Russia lost its dominant position in international politics.

**The Causes of Russia's Defeat in the Crimean War.** Russia's losses in the Crimean War were tremendous. Military expenditures too were very great, and the devastation wrought by the war was considerable. Russia's foreign trade dropped to almost one-fourth. Agriculture and industry were disorganized.

The defeat of tsarist Russia in the Crimean War was due to deep-laying economic causes. According to Marx and Engels the Crimean War was a hopeless struggle of a nation with a backward mode of production against nations with more progressive forms of social and economic relations. War brought to light the superiority of capitalism over the feudal-serf system.

Tsarism lost the Crimean War because of Russia's economic, political and military backwardness. At the outbreak of the Crimean War neither Russia nor the allies were prepared for war. By the spring of 1855 the allies had already reorganized their forces, whereas disorganization in the Russian army proceeded from bad to worse. Tsarist Russia did not possess an adequate war industry. The armament factory built in Kerch in the 'forties was at a standstill. The projected iron foundry in Moscow had not even been started. The Kamensk War Works in the Urals produced cannon which blew up during tests.

Russia had practically no railways at the time of the Crimean War. Transportation was effected by horse-drawn carts requisitioned from the peasants. It took months to deliver grain to Sevastopol from Perekop. The allies, on the other hand, laid a railway line from Balaklava to Sevastopol and thus ensured the swift transportation of troops and supplies.

Russian armament too was inferior to that of the allies. Russian soldiers used firelocks with an effective range of 600 paces. To reload his gun (through the muzzle) the soldier had to stand upright. The cannon could fire grapeshot at 300 paces and cannon balls at 600 paces. The internal organization of the army in Nicholas' days was also far behind the times. The recruits had their heads shaven and were escorted to their military unit like convicts. The term of military service was 25 years. The soldier was given a furlough and could visit his family only after he had served 15 years. The regiments were unwieldy and ill-fit for military operations. Whereas the allied armies had already introduced extended order, the tsarist army still went into battle in serried columns, presenting an easy target to the enemy guns.

The Crimean War was waged at a time when the administration and leadership of the Russian army was in an appalling state of internal disorganization. The bureaucratic military machine issued contradictory commands. The troops in the Crimea did not even have maps or plans. Corruption, peculation, outright plundering of army rations and

the men's equipment by the commissaries and the military officials, lack of medical care and medicaments—all this completed the picture of tsarism's utter unfitness in a war against the advanced capitalist armies.

Another cause of the defeat was the profound discontent that reigned in the country and in the army. Peasant unrest was rife in the country throughout the Crimean War. In 1854 the peasant movement had spread to ten provinces. In the spring of 1855 an enlistment was announced for the army. Hundreds of thousands of peasants enlisted on the grounds of a rumour that volunteers would receive their emancipation. This rumour not being corroborated, rebellions broke out among the peasantry.

Lenin wrote that the "Crimean War showed how rotten and impotent was serf Russia."\*

The Crimean defeat brought with it a realization that serfdom in tsarist Russia had to be abolished.

Russia's defeat in the Crimean War diminished the importance of Russian tsarism in Europe, depriving it of the leading role it had played from 1815 to 1853. "The distinguishing feature of the Russian empire in this period was that, owing to its backwardness, there were no profound contradictions in its military-feudal system. This gave Russia strength and secured for her a leading position on the European continent. Unlike the Western countries, Russia had no developed and politically mature bourgeoisie. The working class as a revolutionary force did not yet exist. The millions of Russian serf peasants, who formed an inexhaustible source of man power for the state, represented an ignorant, uncivilized and downtrodden mass. The isolated peasant revolts that did occur could not seriously weaken the power of the tsarist police, army and bureaucracy. Tsarist Russia, with its obedient army and diplomacy, was the gendarme of Europe, the bugbear of the revolutionary and national liberation movements in Europe. In the reign of Nicholas I this reactionary influence of Russia reached its apex. . . ." \*\*

#### 41. TSARISM IN THE FAR EAST

The defeat of tsarism in the Crimean War, which had deprived Russia of the possibility of consolidating herself in the Near East, revived the problem of the Pacific Ocean. As far back as the early 'forties the expedition of Middendorf, sent by the Academy of Sciences into North-eastern Siberia, had penetrated the Amur region, made certain that it was not occupied by China, and entered into relations with the native population of the Amur—the Gilyaks. The Russian-American Company was charged to explore the mouth of the Amur, but the representatives

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\* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. XV, p. 143, Moscow 1937.

\*\* *History of Diplomacy*, Russ. ed., Vol. I, p. 299-300, Moscow 1941.

of this company, like the head of foreign affairs during the reign of Nicholas I—Nesselrode—were disinclined to consolidate Russian influence on the Amur.

The expedition did not reach the mouth of the Amur. On the basis of this perfunctory expedition, Nesselrode reported to the tsar: "Sakhalin is a peninsula. The Amur is of no significance whatever to Russia." The question of the Amur, alleged to have no connection with the southern seas of the Pacific, was, on the basis of this report, shelved.

But at the end of the 'forties Nevelsky, a Russian naval officer supported by Muravyov, the governor-general of Eastern Siberia, fitted out an expedition and sailed from Petropavlovsk on the brig *Baikal* for the eastern shores of Sakhalin. In September, when the brig had been given up as lost, it showed up in Bay Ayan, on its way back from the Island of Sakhalin. "Sakhalin is an island. Big ships can enter the Amur from the north and south. The delusions under which we have laboured for ages have been dissipated," reported Nevelsky. Instead of eliciting the government's approval for his discovery Nevelsky was prosecuted and degraded to the ranks for having violated the tsarist order forbidding the expedition. Only after the intercession of Muravyov was Nevelsky permitted to found a winter station on the southeastern shores of the Sea of Okhotsk and to raise the Russian military flag at the mouth of the Amur. This was the beginning of a vigorous colonization of the Amur. Towns sprang up and Cossacks and peasants began to settle here.

In 1858 the Chinese commander-in-chief on the Amur signed a treaty in the town of Aigun ceding the left bank of the Amur to tsarist Russia; the Ussurian region was left to the joint disposal of Russia and China. In 1858 the city of Khabarovsk was founded. In the winter of 1860 the Aigun Treaty was confirmed by the Treaty of Peking which gave tsarist Russia vast lands lying between the river Ussuri and the Pacific Ocean. The fortress of Vladivostok was erected (1860) on the coast of the Pacific, and the fleet transferred there.

The tsarist government at the same time negotiated with the United States of America for the sale of its American colonies, Alaska and the Aleutian Islands. Tsarism considered it unprofitable to exploit these remote colonies, which presented difficulties in the way of defence. In 1867 the tsarist government sold Alaska and the Aleutian Islands to the United States for seven million dollars.

## 42. THE FORMATION OF IDEOLOGICAL TENDENCIES AND THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT BETWEEN THE 'THIRTIES AND 'FIFTIES

**The struggle of Nicholas I Against the Ideological Influence of the European Bourgeois Revolution.** The European revolution had a powerful ideological influence on Russian life. During this historic epoch, when the old feudal relations underwent radical changes

and were being displaced by new, bourgeois, capitalist relations, the progressive bourgeois-revolutionary ideas of European writers played a very great role in the formation of the ideas of Russia's advanced men. These ideas not only helped to give an understanding of the grandeur of the historical changes that were taking place in Europe, but engendered the desire to introduce similar changes in backward, feudal Russia. The ideas of the French bourgeois revolution—freedom, equality, fraternity—were expressed, under Russian conditions—in a revolutionary demand for the abolition of serfdom and the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy. Such was the program which formed the basis of the rather diverse ideological trends characteristic of social life in Russia during the reign of Nicholas.

Nicholas I carried on a struggle against the revolution not only with the help of military and diplomatic resources in Europe, not only by open repressive measures, exile and arrests in Russia, but also with the help of ideological weapons. The tsarist government put forward the theory of "official nationality" to counteract revolutionary, progressive ideas and theories. This formula, the author of which was S. S. Uvarov, Minister of Education from 1833 to 1849, claimed that the Russian people were inherently religious, had always been loyal to the tsar and regarded serfdom as a natural state. Such was the meaning of the Uvarov formula: "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality." The theory of the "official nationality" counterpoised "stable" feudal Russia to the "decaying" West. This reactionary theory, profoundly inimical to the progressive ideas of the time, served as the basis for a bitter struggle against all progressive and revolutionary ideas and men.

**Circles of Stankevich and Herzen.** The bourgeois revolutions of 1830-1848 in Europe and the peasant uprisings in Russia confronted the progressive men of Russia with the basic question: "Whither is Russia going? What is to be the course of her social progress?"

The educated, progressive representatives of the Russian nobility closely studied the political theories of bourgeois France and classical German philosophy, seeking therein an answer to the question regarding the paths and prospects of Russia's development.

The centre of ideological-political life during the period from the 'thirties to the 'fifties was the Moscow University where many future talented writers and public men were studying. The early 'thirties saw the formation of a circle by the young student-philosopher, Nikolai Vladimirovich Stankevich, a man of profound education and great intellect. The members of this circle were keenly interested in the German philosophy of Fichte, Schelling, and above all Hegel. Chernyshevsky wrote of this circle: "These people lived decidedly on philosophy alone, discussed it day and night, whenever they met. They regarded everything and decided everything from the philosophical point of view."



But many of the progressive public men, chiefly the revolutionary youth, were not content with this departure into the realm of abstract ideas. Carried away by the theories of the French utopian socialist, Saint-Simon, they demanded a change from speculative philosophy to political activity and the propaganda of the ideas of socialism. The exponent of the interests and demands of this section of the progressive youth was the circle of Herzen and Ogaryov. The members of this circle of Herzen's regarded themselves the "children of the Decembrists," whose mission it was to continue their struggle against the autocracy and serfdom.

**A. I. Herzen (1812-1870).** Alexander Ivanovich Herzen was born in 1812. His father was a rich Russian landlord by the name of Yakovlev, his mother, a native of Württemberg, Louisa Haag. Their marriage not having been legalized, their son was surnamed Herzen (from the German word *Herz* meaning Heart).

Herzen received an excellent education at home. His father's rich library of French and German books was the source of information for the inquisitive and capable boy. His French tutor bred in Herzen a veneration for the French revolution and republican forms of government. Another teacher, a seminary student, supplied Herzen with revolutionary poems by Ryleyev and Pushkin. Ryleyev's *Meditations* made a profound impression on Herzen. "The execution of Pestel and his associates finally roused my soul from its childish sleep," Herzen later wrote about the Decembrists.

In 1825 Herzen met the future poet Ogaryov with whom he contracted a lifelong friendship. During one of their walks through Moscow they took "Hannibal's Oath" on the Vorobyovi Gori, vowing to devote their lives to the revolutionary struggle. They remained loyal to this pledge to the end of their days. On entering the Moscow University Herzen became the centre of a circle of the revolutionary youth. He was shortly afterwards arrested and spent several years in exile.

On his return to Moscow Herzen and Belinsky together embarked upon extensive literary-publicist activities. Lenin wrote of Herzen of those days:

"In feudal Russia of the forties of the 19th century he rose to a height which made him the equal of the greatest thinkers of his time."\*

In 1847 Herzen went abroad. He travelled through revolutionary France and Italy. The revolution of 1848 found Herzen in Paris. The defeat of the Paris proletariat, the cowardly conduct of the petty-bourgeois leaders, the reprisals of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie against the workers, filled Herzen with a profound pessimism.

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\* Lenin, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 533, Moscow 1946.

Disillusioned with the European revolution, Herzen placed all his hopes on the Russian peasant community. He became the founder of peasant utopian socialism in Russia. He fought for the emancipation of the peasants from tsarism and serfdom, and hoped that Russia would avoid the bourgeois system, that it would arrive at socialism by making use of the village community as the nucleus of the socialist system of organization. Herzen was subject to vacillation and errors. At times he placed his hopes on reforms and not on revolution. But his vacillations were transient and not of long duration, and he always remained a revolutionary democrat. Lenin attributed Herzen's mistakes to the conditions of the transition period in which he lived: "Herzen's spiritual drama was a product and reflection of that epoch in world history when the revolutionism of the bourgeois democracy was *already* passing away (in Europe), and the revolutionism of the Socialist proletariat had *not yet* ripened."\*

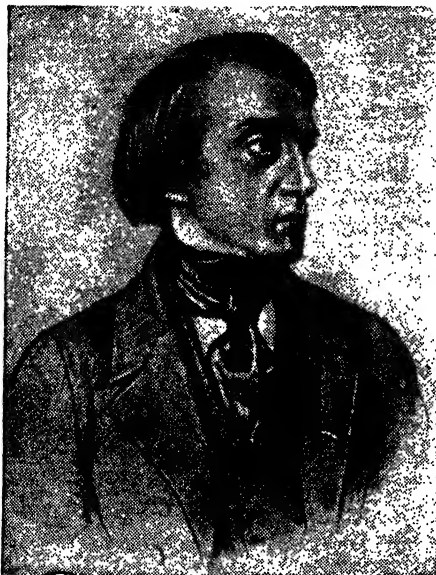
Herzen's love for the Russian people and his hatred of serfdom and tsarism deepened when he found himself in a foreign land. Having been deprived of Russian citizenship, Herzen adopted Swiss citizenship and eventually migrated to London. In 1853 he founded in London the "Free Russian Press" and started publishing a revolutionary magazine *Polyarnaya Zvezda* (*Polar Star*). The magazine covers carried the portraits of the executed Decembrists. The very name *Polar Star* (which was the name of the almanac of the Decembrists Ryleyev and Bestuzhev) symbolized Herzen's determination to continue the work of the Decembrists. From 1857 to 1867 Herzen published abroad the famous magazine *Kolokol* (*The Tocsin*). Under the motto "I Appeal to the Living" he called upon men to struggle against serfdom. Herzen was awakened by the Decembrists, and he became the first teacher of a new, revolutionary generation—the *Raznochintsi* \*\* of the 'sixties, foremost among them Chernyshevsky.



A. I. Herzen in the 'thirties.  
From a portrait by Vitberg

\* *Ibid.*, p. 537.

\*\* *Raznochintsi* were the so-called "commoners," members of the intelligentsia not belonging to the privileged classes. — *Trans.*



V. G. Belinsky.

*A lithograph of K. Gorbunov, 1843*

**V. G. Belinsky (1811-1848).** The first revolutionary *Raznochinets*, Vissarion Grigoryevich Belinsky, was a contemporary of Herzen. His friends called him "Vissarion Furioso" for his passionate nature and vehement sincerity. Belinsky was the son of a naval surgeon. His readings of Pushkin, Zhukovsky, Derzhavin developed in Belinsky at an early age a passionate love of literature. While still a student at the Moscow University, Belinsky wrote a dramatic novel *Dimitri Kalinin*, which, though poor in literary merit, was remarkable for the force and vehemence of its protest against serfdom. The story was considered by the authorities to be a mischievous and disgraceful misdemeanor in

a student. Young Belinsky stood in danger of being exiled to Siberia. The university authorities expelled Belinsky from the university with the following certificate: "Dismissed on account of ill-health combined with ineptitude."

Thus did Belinsky in the gloomy epoch of Nicholas start on a literary career filled with hardships and deprivations. Belinsky was the founder of Russian critical literature. His criticism played a tremendous role in the development of Russian realistic literature. His opinion was the final judgment for many Russian writers whose talents he discovered and carefully nurtured with his suggestions. Belinsky looked upon his literary activities as service to the people, as a means for its revolutionary enlightenment. Belinsky's views on the social significance and the high role of a writer in Russia were most strikingly reflected in his famous letter to Gogol—a strong impeachment of the latter's attempt to betray the people's cause and take sides with tsarism. As Lenin said, it was "one of the best of the writings that appeared in the uncensored democratic press."\* This was the manifesto of revolutionary democracy of the 'forties, expressing the passionate protest of progressive people

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\* Lenin, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. XI, p. 59, Moscow 1938.

and the struggle of the peasants against serfdom. In this letter, which was privately circulated in hundreds of written copies, Belinsky sharply criticized the reactionary nature of Gogol's articles published under the title of *Selected Passages from My Correspondence with My Friends*. Belinsky wrote Gogol that Russia's salvation lay not in preachings or prayers but in the abolition of serfdom, the awakening in the people of its sense of human dignity and in its enlightenment.

Belinsky was one of the first revolutionary enlighteners. The censorship shackled and stifled the thought and word of the writer, but he overcame the censorship bans by cleverly-worded articles expounding the most revolutionary ideas. Belinsky himself wrote bitterly of the persecution of the censorship: "Nature condemned me to bark like a dog and howl like a jackal but circumstances compel me to mew like a cat and wave my tail like a fox." Belinsky was a revolutionary democrat, inspired with a fierce hatred of serfdom and every form of oppression, an ardent champion of enlightenment. He loved his country passionately, and believed that a great future lay before it. A century ago, not long before his death, Belinsky wrote: "We envy our grandchildren and great-grandchildren who are predestined to see Russia in 1940 standing at the head of an educated world, establishing laws in science and art and accepting the reverential tribute of enlightened mankind."

Belinsky died in 1848 of tuberculosis. Death saved him from the Fortress of Peter and Paul where he was to have been imprisoned on the order of the tsar.



V. G. Belinsky on his deathbed. From a drawing by A. A. Naumov

**The Westerners and Slavophiles.** The outstanding Russian thinker, Nikolai Vladimirovich Stankevich, died in 1840 at the age of 27. Two literary-political trends—the Westerners and Slavophiles—took form at this time. At the head of the circle of the Westerners stood Belinsky and Herzen. The nucleus of the circle of Westerners consisted of Belinsky, Herzen, Ogaryov, Granovsky, Bakunin and others. The circle of their ideological opponents—the Slavophiles—numbered among its members Khomyakov, the Kireyev brothers, the Aksakov brothers and others.

The Westerners and the Slavophiles were divided by their profoundly different attitudes to the past and future of Russia, and by the different estimation of the significance of Western Europe for Russia. The Westerners strongly criticized the existing feudal system and advocated Russia's need for European civilization. The Slavophiles, on the contrary, condemned the imitation of European culture that had started since the days of Peter I. They postulated for Russia an original path of development to be based on the Russian *obshchina* (village community) and claimed that serfdom should be abolished only from above, and by a gradual process. The Slavophil political ideal was a union of all Slavs around Russia. They demanded the convocation of the *Zemsky Sobor*, upon which they placed no revolutionary tasks. "To the government—the power of authority, to the people—the power of opinion," said the Slavophiles. Belinsky, Herzen, Ogaryov, Granovsky,\* and other of the Westerners were resolute opponents of the Slavophiles. They proved the reactionary nature of the views of the Slavophiles, who were monarchists idealizing the reactionary survivals of the past and fearing radical changes in the social system of Russia.

The final rupture between the Westerners and the Slavophiles took place in 1844-1845. There was no unanimity, however, in the circle of the Westerners either. Belinsky and Herzen headed the consistently democratic wing of the Westerners. A liberal group of Westerners including Chicherin, Granovsky and others took form. This group were opposed to revolution and socialism. Their ideal was a constitutional monarchy and liberal-bourgeois reforms.

**The Circle of Petrashevsky.** A revolutionary circle of utopian-socialists headed by M. V. Petrashevsky was formed in St. Petersburg in the middle of the forties of the 19th century. This circle consisted of progressive young *Raznochintsy* united by their hatred of the autocracy and serfdom, and was attended by Dostoyevsky, Saltykov-Shchedrin and other writers.

Mikhail Vasilyevich Butashevich-Petrashevsky, born in 1821, the son of a nobleman, was the organizer and ideological leader of

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\* Granovsky subsequently withdrew from the circle of Belinsky and Herzen.

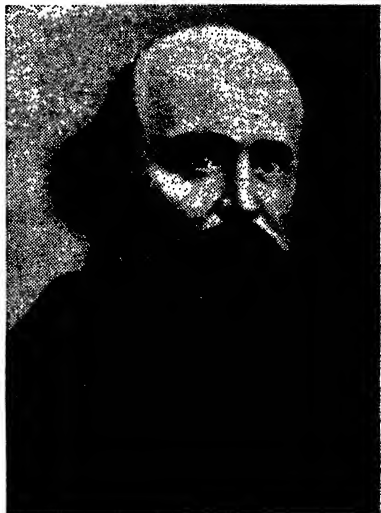
the circle. Petrashevsky was a clever and courageous man. He had received a good education and regarded himself as the disciple and follower of the famous French utopian-socialist Fourier (1772-1837).

His circle met regularly every Friday at his apartment and discussed the main principles of Fourier's doctrine as well as current political topics which were agitating society.

Belinsky's letter to Gogol was read and discussed with sympathy in Petrashevsky's circle. Petrashevsky compiled and edited a *Pocket Dictionary of Foreign Words* wherein, ostensibly with the object of explaining "foreign words," he outlined the doctrine of the utopian-socialists of Western Europe. Petrashevsky, like Fourier, was an advocate of introducing socialism by peaceful means.

The Western European revolutions of 1848 strongly influenced the members of the circle. Some of them were no longer satisfied with speeches and readings, and began to seek ways and means of working for the revolution. Speshnev took up a revolutionary position in Petrashevsky's circle. He was in favour of conspirative tactics, demanded the organization of a secret society and the preparation for an uprising against tsarism. The propaganda of the Petrashevskians did not assume wide proportions.

The Petrashevskians were arrested in 1849, on the report of a secret police agent. Investigations failing to reveal the existence of an organized secret society, the committee of enquiry accused them of a "conspiracy of ideas" which "corrupted men's minds." For sympathizing with communist and republican ideas 15 men out of the 34 arrested, including F. M. Dostoyevsky, the future great Russian writer, were condemned to death; the rest were sentenced to penal servitude and exile in Siberia. The condemned were taken from the Fortress of Peter and Paul and brought to the square where a high black scaffold had been erected. Troops surrounded them, and a crowd of people had gathered. Petrashevsky and two other members of his circle were tied to the posts and their faces covered with white hoods. The soldiers took aim. The drums beat. The condemned lived through the horrors of imminent death. Then suddenly the drums grew silent and they



M. V. Butashevich-Petrashkevsky

heard the announcement of the "mercy" of the tsar—the commutation of their death sentence to penal servitude for life. Such were the methods employed by Nicholas I against "audacious thoughts."

### 43. SCIENCE, LITERATURE AND ART IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

**Science.** The centres of scientific life in feudal Russia in the first half of the 19th century were the Academy of Sciences, the universities and scientific associations. The government allotted trivial appropriations for scientific research, but despite extremely unfavourable conditions, science made big strides in the first half of the 19th century. Russia produced a number of great scientists.

One of the greatest mathematicians of the 19th century was Nikolai Ivanovich Lobachevsky (1793-1856), who lectured in the Kazan University on celestial mechanics and the theory of numbers. The young professor-mathematician, Lobachevsky, arrived at a new system of geometry, "non-Euclidian geometry." A new conception of space was born, other than as treated by Euclid. The work of Lobachevsky was published in 1829. The famous English mathematician Sylvester called Lobachevsky the "Copernicus of geometry," but Russia of the day failed to appreciate him and some magazines of the capital even ridiculed his work. Only later did his work in geometry receive the recognition it merited.

Russian scientific thought penetrated the most advanced branches of science and engineering. Russian scientists and inventors achieved their most significant successes in the field of electrical engineering, but the fate of these inventors was a sad one.

The well-known Russian physicist, Vasili Vladimirovich Petrov (1762-1834), the son of a provincial Russian priest, discovered electrolysis (1802-1803), the basis of modern electro-chemistry, independently of the English scientists Nicholson and Carlisle. He created the Voltaic arc several years before Davy. Yet this remarkable invention was given to the world as the work of the Englishman Davy while the Russian inventor was forgotten. The works of Petrov received the recognition they deserved only half a century after his death.

Russian scientists and inventors were the first to make practical use of electric current. Schilling constructed the first electro-magnetic telegraph in the world at Petersburg in 1832, installing it between the buildings of the Ministry of Communications and the Winter Palace. But that is where the matter ended. A similar apparatus was invented several years later by the Englishmen Wheatstone and Cooke, and was used throughout the world.

Another outstanding Russian scientist, Jakobi (1801-1874),

discovered galvanoplastics. He built the first power engine, and his electric boat carried passengers along the Neva in 1838. Only half a century later did a similar invention appear on the Thames, arousing the amazement of contemporaries who had no idea of the existence of the long-forgotten Russian invention.

In 1833 the Russian mechanic Cherepanov built the first Russian steam engine of original design in the Urals. However, it had no effect whatever on the development of engineering in Russia, which continued for a long time to import steam engines from abroad.

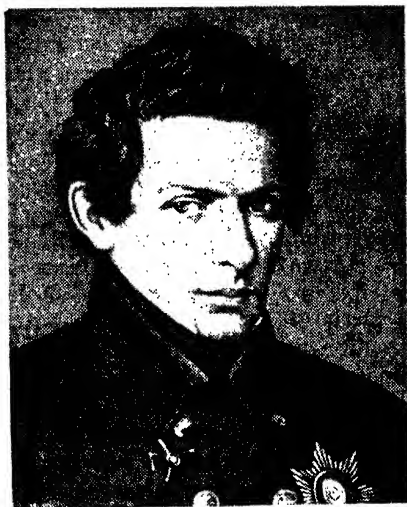
At the end of 1830 the well-known Russian astronomer, Vasili Yakovlevich Struve (1793-

1864), founded the famous Pulkovo Observatory near St. Petersburg. In the first half of the 19th century the noted scientist N. N. Zinin made a number of world-important discoveries in the field of chemistry, laying the foundation for the Russian school of chemistry.

In the field of medicine the famous Russian physician and surgeon, scientist and teacher, Nikolai Ivanovich Pirogov (1810-1881), achieved fame with his new methods of surgery and anatomy. In 1856, in an article *Questions of Life*, Pirogov opposed the old forms of education, and called for the education of new people with honest, democratic convictions.

One of the greatest naturalists of the first half of the 19th century, the founder of embryology, Karl Baer, worked in the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. He undertook an energetic study of the natural resources of Russia, made a number of expeditions and took an active part in the foundation of the Geographical Society which included an Ethnographic Museum.

In 1819-1821 the Russian expedition of Lazarev sailed to high southern latitudes where it discovered many new islands, and, forcing its way through the ice, arrived at the shores of the Antarctic. The honour of discovering this southern continent belongs to the Russians. The Pacific Ocean is studded with islands bearing Russian names, such as Suvorov Island, Kutuzov Island, *Beregis* (Beware) Reef, and others.



N. I. Lobachevsky. *From a portrait by an unknown Russian painter*



Russian historiography made great advances in the early 19th century. *The History of the Russian State* by Karamzin was published as far back as the reign of Alexander I and was an important event at the time. In the words of Pushkin, Karamzin discovered Russian history as Columbus had discovered America. Karamzin's *History of the Russian State*, however, bears obvious traces of serf-owner ideology. In history, according to Karamzin, "everything depends on the will of the autocrat who, like a skilled mechanic, sets masses in motion by the move of a finger."

**Literature.** Literature played a tremendous social role in the period of the disintegration of the old feudal-serf relations and the growth of new, capitalist relations.

The writers, critics and publicists of the 'thirties and 'forties, in addition to being exponents of the progressive ideas of their times were champions of a new, free life. Herzen, dealing with literature and its significance in that epoch, wrote in his work *On the Development of Revolutionary Ideas in Russia*: "Literature, with a people that does not possess political liberty is the only tribune from which it can make its cry of indignation and its voice of conscience heard."

Tsarism ruthlessly persecuted progressive writers and poets. The tsarist censorship expunged from books the slightest hint of criticism against the existing order. The Censorship Committee, established in 1849, banned many books and magazines which did not conform to the trend of "official nationality."

Tsarism, however, did not stop at mere persecution of literary activity. Herzen writes of the tragic fate that befell the progressive men of the days of Nicholas and cites a brief but expressive list of the crimes committed by the monarchy of Nicholas in regard to Russian writers and poets:

*Ryleyev*, hung by Nicholas.

*Pushkin*, killed in a duel, at the age of 38.

*Griboyedov*, assassinated in Teheran.

*Lermontov*, killed in a duel . . . in the Caucasus.

*Venevitinov*, killed by society, at the age of 22.

*Koltsov*, killed by his family, at the age of 33.

*Belinsky*, killed at the age of 35 by hunger and poverty.

*Baratynsky*, died after 12 years of exile.

An outstanding work of Russian letters, *Wit Works Woe* by Griboyedov (1795-1829) was a biting satire on the upper aristocracy, the ruling bureaucracy and the arrogant military. This comedy played an important social role. Belinsky wrote that "while still in manuscript *Wit Works Woe* had been learned by heart by the whole of Russia."

When asked during cross-examination which of all the works he had read contributed chiefly to the development of his liberal views,

the Decembrist Steingel listed along with the works of Voltaire and Radishchev *Wit Works Woe*. Banned by the tsarist censorship this book circulated from hand to hand for a long time in manuscript form, and copies were distributed throughout the provinces. Griboyedov was all the more dangerous to tsarism in that he was associated with the Decembrists, although he was not in complete agreement with their views. That is why Nicholas I decided to rid himself of Griboyedov. He sent the poet, against his wishes, as ambassador to Teheran, where the Russian dramatist was shortly afterwards killed by a fanatic mob worked up into a fury over the persecutions of Russian tsarism.

Another victim of Nicholas' reign was the talented Russian writer and philosopher, Pyotr Yakovlevich Chaadayev (1796-1856), friend of Pushkin. The great poet dedicated three remarkable "Epistles" to Chaadayev. In 1836 Chaadayev's famous *Philosophical Letter* sharply criticizing past and present feudal Russia was published in the *Telescope*. On reading Chaadayev's article Nicholas I wrote: "Having read the article, I find that its contents are a mixture of brazen nonsense worthy of a madman." The tsar had Chaadayev certified as insane and ordered him to be kept under constant medical surveillance and all his manuscripts to be confiscated. Nicholas I ordered the young poet Polezhayev, author of the poem *Sashka*, conscripted into the army, where, after severe manhandling, he died in a military hospital. But the most tragic and irretrievable loss to Russia was the death of her poet genius, Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin. Greatest of Russian poets, a genius of world literature, the founder of Russian realism and the creator of a Russian literary language, A. S. Pushkin is the pride and glory of the Russian people. Pushkin was a nobleman but, in the apt words of the great proletarian writer Gorky: "For him the interests of the whole nation stood higher than the interests of the nobility, and his personal experience was broader and deeper than the experience of the class of nobles." Pushkin was not only a great poet but a great citizen, who reflected to a certain degree the revolutionary aspirations of the people.

Pushkin was born in Moscow in 1799, in the family of a high-born impecunious nobleman. With the assistance of his uncle's and father's friends Pushkin was admitted into the newly-founded aristocratic Lyceum of Tsarskoye Selo. The French Encyclopaedists exerted a great influence on Pushkin in his youth. From them he acquired his striving after enlightenment and his critical attitude to the antiquated feudal system. From the revolutionary writers and poets of Western Europe he drew his hatred of tyrants. As early as 1815 the sixteen-year-old Pushkin expressed his hatred of slavery in his poem *To Licinius*. In 1817 Pushkin graduated from the Lyceum. The stark realities of feudal Russia deeply affected the impressionable young poet.

Following the example of Radishchev he wrote an ode and gave it the same name as Radishchev's—*Liberty*. But whereas Radishchev had dreamed of "a rising of warlike hosts to arm all with hope," and bring the tsar to the block, Pushkin called for an uprising against the tsar: "Arise, ye fallen slaves!"

His challenge to the autocracy rang with anger and hatred.

*Miscreant autocrat, hear my hate  
Of you, your sceptre and your throne,  
Your children's death, your own black fate  
I enjoy with a heart as hard as stone.*

Pushkin in his poems attacked the adherents and preachers of absolutism, branded Arakcheyev, the tsar's favourite, called the reactionary Minister of Education, Golitsyn, "persecutor of education," and the inspirer of reaction, the archimandrite Photius a semi-fanatic and a semi-rogué who made "the curse, the sword, the cross and whip," his weapons. In his poem *The Country*, Pushkin speaks of "savage gentry which know no sentiment, no law."

The revolutionary verses of the great poet could not go unpunished in the Russia of those days. Pushkin was exiled to the south, but the poet continued even in exile (in Kishinev and Odessa) to write poems and verses expressing his love of liberty. From Odessa the poet was banished to the village of Mikhailovskoye, to his father's estate, and his father was commissioned to keep an eye on his son. Here the poet worked on his great masterpiece *Eugene Onegin*, completed his poem *Gypsies* and wrote the tragedy *Boris Godunov*, which Benkendorf, in his report to the tsar, described as presenting the "tsarist power in a horrible light." The tsar was of the same opinion and *Boris Godunov* was proscribed for a number of years.

Pushkin was closely connected with the Decembrists, many of whom were his friends, but he himself did not belong to their secret society. When, in 1826, shortly after the execution of the Decembrists, Nicholas I summoned Pushkin from exile and asked him: "What would you have done if you had been in St. Petersburg on December 14?" Pushkin retorted: "I would have joined the ranks of the rebels." The tsar appointed himself Pushkin's sole censor and withheld the publication of his works for a long time.

A painful atmosphere of spying, slander, degradation and persecution was created around Pushkin.

In 1837 Pushkin died of a mortal wound received in a duel with the officer D'Anthès, the adopted son of the Dutch ambassador. Thousands of people enraged by the dastardly murder, came to accompany the body of the great poet to his last rest. At the tsar's orders gen-



A. S. Pushkin.

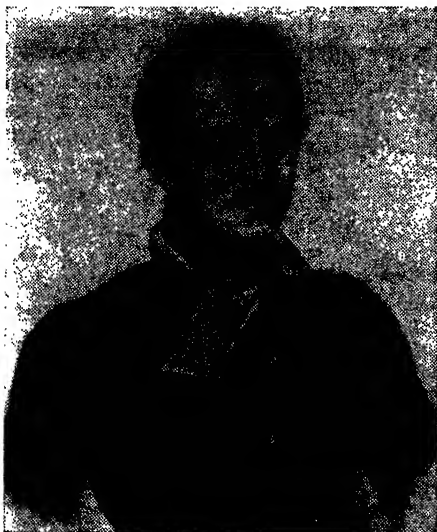
*From a portrait painted by Tropinin*

darmes secretly removed the poet's body at night and buried it in the Svyatogorsk Monastery, near Pushkin's estate.

Another great Russian poet of the days of Nicholas—Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov (1814-1841)—condemned the instigators of Pushkin's murder in a virulent poem *On the Death of a Poet*, for which the author was exiled to the Caucasus. In 1841, at the age of 27, in the prime of his great gifts Lermontov was killed in a duel. The poetry of Lermontov, permeated with the spirit of rebellion and liberty, profoundly artistic and lyrical in quality, won the poet immense popularity. Such works of Lermontov as *A Hero of Our Time*, *Mtsyri*, *Masquerade*, *Demon*, and others won world fame.

When the news of Lermontov's death reached Nicholas he maliciously exclaimed: "A dog—a dog's death!"

The harsh conditions created during the reign of Nicholas affected the personal and creative life of the great Russian writer Nikolai Vasilyevich Gogol (1809-1852). His remarkable works—*Inspector General*, *Dead Souls*, *Old-World Gentlefolks*, and others are a scathing satire in forceful and vivid style on the utter depravity



M. Y. Lermontov.

From a water-colour by K. Gorbunov

of the landed nobility. "*Dead Souls* staggered all Russia," said Herzen, writing of the impression created by this work. "Contemporary Russia needed such an indictment. It is the history of a disease written by a master hand. Gogol's poetry is the cry of horror and shame emitted by a man, degraded by foul living, when he suddenly catches sight of his brutalized face in a mirror."

Of Gogol's earlier works mention may be made of *Evenings in a Farm Near Dikan-ka*, and *Taras Bulba* of the *Mirgorod* series.

*Evenings in a Farm Near Dikanka*, which brought Gogol wide popularity, are poetical sketches of the Ukraine, full

of charm and beauty and scintillating humour. They are, in the words of Belinsky "the gay comicality, the smile of youth greeting the lovely world."

No less vivid and picturesque is his historical tale *Taras Bulba* in which Gogol describes the valiant deeds of Ukrainian Cossackdom in the 16th century in their fight against foreign invaders—the Poles.

Belinsky enthusiastically described this tale as an episode of a great national epos and compared *Taras Bulba* to Homer's *Iliad*.

In these works Gogol is seen as a great artist of the romantic school.

Gogol died in the heyday of his tremendous creative power. He fell a prey to mental disease at the end of his life, and during a nervous attack destroyed the concluding part of his great poem *Dead Souls*, over which he had worked for many years.

A notable artistic record of the period were Herzen's brilliant works. His memoirs *Byloye i Dumy* represent a faithful chronicle both of Herzen's own life and that of the best progressive men of his day, and depict the growth of Russian social thought in the gloomy days of the reaction under Nicholas. The hero of Herzen's novel *Whose Fault?*—the honest, talented, courageous Vladimir Belov, could find no place for himself in life; he became the "superfluous man"—the typical figure of Russian classical literature of the 19th century.

Russian literature in the first half of the 19th century was inseparably bound up with the social-political life of the country. It was steeped in the advanced ideas of its times and chose the path of artistic realism, freeing itself from the temporary influence of the sentimental and romantic trends.

The founders of the school of artistic realism were the great Russian writers A. S. Pushkin, A. S. Griboyedov, N. V. Gogol and I. A. Krylov.

The literary creations of these writers are immortal; apart from being a true and vivid expression of the life of their times, they are permeated with a passionate faith in a better future for the great Russian people.

Our country deeply reveres the memory of its great writers and poets. Pushkin is the most beloved poet of the peoples of the Soviet Union. The prophetic words of the great poet, written not long before his death, in his remarkable poem *Monumentum* have come true.

*"And I shall for long years be loved by all nation  
Because for noble passions with my lyre I call,  
Because in pitiless days I prayed for liberation,  
Asked clemency for those who fall."*

**Art.** The profoundly progressive ideas of national self-consciousness, the national pride of a people awakening to social life were also mirrored in art, which, like literature, became realistic.

In the reign of Nicholas I battle-painting, the portrayal of military life, etc., enjoyed special patronage. Exact reproduction of all details of uniform, arms and regimental insignia was held to be the most essential feature of this type of art. The official, academic school of painting was represented by K. F. Bryullov (1799-1852). His picture, *The Last Day of Pompeii*, exhibited in 1830, met with great success.

*"And the 'Last Day of Pompeii'  
Became the first day for the Russian brush,"*



N. V. Gogol.

*From a portrait painted by  
F. A. Moller, 1841*

a contemporary poet wrote of this picture. Its success was due not only to the painter's artistic skill but to his lavish use of light and colour effects (fire, lightning), which made a profound impression on the spectator. The quest for realism found its expression in the works of the noted Russian painter A. A. Ivanov whose picture *The Appearance of Christ Among the People* was the work of nearly 30 years.

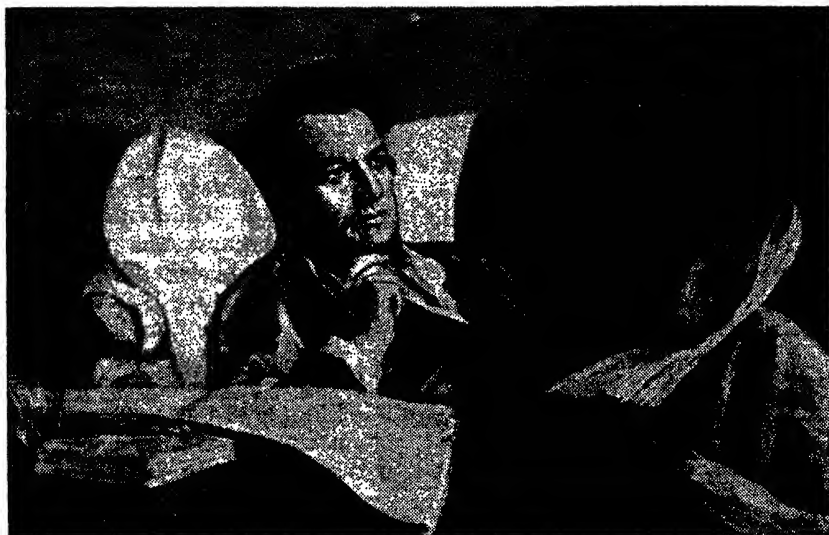
One of the first realist-painters was A. G. Venetsianov. The son of a pie-vendor, his observations, from early childhood, of life of workmen, handicraftsmen and peasants gave his work a realistic trend. His big picture *Threshing Floor* and various scenes from peasant life were somewhat glossed, but the very idea of putting the peasant on canvas was a bold one in those days.

At the end of 1840 the remarkable genre-painter, F. A. Fedotov, exhibited his first picture. The Academy of Art awarded Fedotov the title of academician for his picture *The Major's Betrothal*. The votaries of classic traditions in painting scorned Fedotov's pictures because they were done in the popular spirit.

Among the most distinguished portrait painters were the serf Tropinin, who made excellent portraits of Karamzin and Pushkin, and the fine romantic artist Kiprensky, who won renown for his admirable portraits of Krylov, Pushkin and portraits of himself.

A. Voronikhin was a distinguished architect of the early 19th century. His Cathedral of Kazan, built in St. Petersburg in the style of St. Peter's in Rome, is one of the finest monuments of the latest church architecture in Russia.

The founder of Russian opera and symphonic music, M. I. Glinka (1809-1857), drew lavishly on native folk melodies which he combined with the experience of West European music. Glinka asserted the world significance of the Russian national musical art. Glinka's works are characterized by their profound ideological nature, realism and popular character. The Russian aristocracy regarded the works of Glinka with hostility, condemning his use of folk melodies. Nor was his great opera, *Ivan Susanin*, on a theme of popular patriotism, understood by the ruling classes who called it "coachmen's music." Glinka's classic opera *Ruslan and Ludmila* presenting the element of Russian folklore in a new light was also withdrawn a year after its première, and was never again performed during the composer's lifetime. Glinka included Russian, Byelorussian, Ukrainian, Finnish, Polish, Georgian, Spanish and other melodies in his compositions. Glinka's admirable symphonic compositions *Spanish Overture* (based on popular Spanish melodies), and *Kamarinskaya* (for symphony orchestra) stood out against the background of West European musical art for their boldness and originality and were the basis for the further powerful development of Russian symphonic works. The great Russian composer Chaikovsky wrote subsequently that the entire Russian symphonic



M. I. Glinka at work on his opera *Ruslan and Ludmila*.

*From a portrait painted by I. E. Repin*

school is imbedded in Glinka's *Kamarsinskaya* "... like an oak in an acorn."

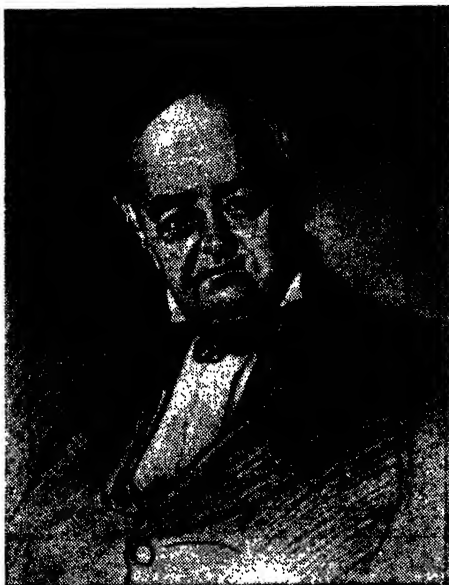
Unappreciated in his own country and weary of persecutions, Glinka went abroad and there he died.

Glinka was followed by the composer Dargomyzhsky (1813-1869), to whom, as to Glinka, the basic principle of Russian musical art was high artistic realism. Dargomyzhsky's career as a composer was also set with thorns. *Rusalka*, Dargomyzhsky's best opera, was fairly coldly received at its first performance and it was not until 10 years later that it became one of the most popular operas.

*The Stone Guest*, composed by Dargomyzhsky on the unrevised text of Pushkin's titlepiece, is remarkable for its delineation of the characters of the play. In this opera and in his romanzas Dargomyzhsky asserts the truth and naturalness of dramatic declamation and creates new types of lyrical, satirical and comic songs. "I want the sound to express the word directly, I want the truth," wrote Dargomyzhsky at the end of his life.

In the first half of the 19th century the Russian theatre attained remarkable success in art. The Bolshoi (Grand) Theatre in Moscow had originally been built in 1780 on Petrovka Street and was then called the Petrovka Theatre. In 1805 this theatre, grand for its time, was destroyed by fire and rebuilt twenty years later, in 1825, by the archi-





M. S. Shchepkin.  
*From a portrait painted  
 by T. G. Shevchenko*

teat Bova. Fire destroyed the Bolshoi Theatre again in 1853 but it was soon after restored. Russian opera achieved a high degree of perfection in this epoch.

The Maly Theatre was opened in Moscow in 1824 and soon became the centre of theatrical talent. The greatest Russian actor of the past century, the founder of realism on the stage, was Mikhail Semyonovich Shchepkin (1788-1863). The son of a serf peasant, he bought his freedom only at the age of 33. Shchepkin worked for many years in the Maly Theatre, creating immortal characters in the plays of Griboyedov, Gogol and many others. Shchepkin associated with all the leading figures of the social movement of his days.

A remarkable Russian tragedian on the stage of the Moscow Maly Theatre was P. S. Mochalov (1800-1848), who won fame by his Shakespearean performances.

#### 44. THE CULTURE OF THE PEOPLES OF TSARIST RUSSIA IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

**Ukrainian Literature.** Tsarism hindered the formation of independent nations in the outlying regions of Russia and forcibly retarded the cultural development of the oppressed peoples. Fighting for their national existence the oppressed peoples built up their own culture and strove to preserve their native tongues.

The many-millioned Ukrainian people stubbornly continued to create in their native and rich language despite persecution.

One of the distinguished creators of the new Ukrainian literature was I. P. Kotlyarevsky (1769-1838), whose three books in Ukrainian: *Aeneid*, *Natalka-Poltavka* and *Moskal-Charivnik* won for him great popularity. Kotlyarevsky laboured thirty years on the adaptation of Virgil's *Aeneid*. In this work he sati-

rizes the serf-owning nobility and tsarist bureaucracy, and depicts with a touch of elegiac regret the old life and customs under the hetmans.

The Kharkov University, the first in the Ukraine, had a great influence on Ukrainian cultural life, although the government did its utmost to make it the tool of its Russification policy. A group of talented Ukrainian writers—Gulak-Artemovsky, Kvitka-Osnovyanenko, Grebinka and others grew up around this young university.

G. F. Kvitka is regarded as the founder of Ukrainian prose. His *Malorussian Stories* are written in a sentimental moralizing vein.

E. Z. Grebinka (1812-1848) was an outstanding Ukrainian poet of the first half of the 19th century. Grebinka translated into Ukrainian *Poltava* by Pushkin, who was a friend of his. Grebinka's fables *Prikazki*, admirable for their language and vivid portrayal of the hard life of the Ukrainian peasantry, occupy a place of honour in Ukrainian literature. Grebinka is regarded as a classic of Ukrainian letters.

A true poet of the Ukrainian people was Taras Grigoryevich Shevchenko (1814-1861). Shevchenko was the son of a serf who belonged to the rich landlord Engelhardt (whose estate was in the former Zvenigorod uyezd, Kiev province). After losing his mother and then his father, little Shevchenko went to live with a church-chanter at the school where he was learning to read and write. He read the psalter for him "for the departed souls of the serfs" for which he received a tenth of a kopek, "by way of encouragement," as Shevchenko later recalled. Shevchenko quite early displayed a gift for drawing. He ran away from the chanter and went to the house painters who were decorating the church, but could learn nothing from them. Shevchenko also worked as a shepherd and then as a servant-boy to a landlord. His master ordered the coachman to whip him more than once after finding him at his drawings. Shevchenko came to St. Petersburg with his master and there he was sent to a school for painting for guild artisans. In 1836 Shevchenko was introduced by another Ukrainian painter to the writers Zhukovsky and Grebinka, as well as to the famous painter Bryullov. To give Shevchenko's native talent a chance to develop Bryullov painted a portrait of the poet Zhukovsky which he sold by lottery and with the proceeds (2,500 rubles) purchased Shevchenko's freedom. Shevchenko thereupon entered the Academy of Arts. At this period he wrote his first verses. In 1840 the first collection of his poems, *Kobzar*, was published. Shevchenko's best poems are *Naimichka*, the story of a mother's sufferings; *Katerina*, a story of ill-fated love; *Haidamaks*—an epic portrayal of the revolutionary struggle of the peasants against the Polish gentry in 1768. His poem *A Dream* is permeated with hatred against tsarism. It pictures the tsar, Nicholas I (in the shape of a bear), and the crowd

of his court lickspittles with great satirical force. The poem *Caucasus* is a passionate appeal for an open struggle of the toilers of all nations against colonial oppression, for a ruthless struggle against the tsarist "prison of the peoples," where

*From the Moldavians to the Finns  
All are dumb in all tongues.*

In April 1847 Shevchenko was arrested for "revolutionary activity." A secret organization, "The Kirill-Methody Fraternity," organized in 1840, was disclosed in Kiev. The program of the "Fraternity" drawn up by the historian Kostomarov advocated the creation of a federated republic, demanded the abolition of serfdom and the extensive dissemination of education. The "Fraternity" was connected with the Russian Slavophiles. Shevchenko was close to the left, democratic wing of the "Fraternity." He demanded that it engage in active revolutionary work. In 1847 the members of the "Fraternity" were arrested, Shevchenko along with them. His sentence read: "The painter Shevchenko, for his writing of outrageous and highly impudent verses, as possessing robust health, is to be sent as rank-and-file soldier to the Orenburg Special Corps." Nicholas I added to this his resolution: "To be kept under strict surveillance and prohibited from writing and drawing."

Not until 1857, after having spent ten years in the tsarist barracks and experiencing the harsh discipline and ill-usage of army life, was Shevchenko freed. Exile, far from breaking the spirit of the poet-revolutionary, made him more militant than ever. In his new poems he called upon the peasants not to place faith in the tsar, not to wait for him to give them their freedom but to fight for it themselves with arms in hand.

In July 1858 Shevchenko was again arrested at his home place and brought to Kiev. He had to leave the Ukraine and return to St. Petersburg under supervision of the police. In St. Petersburg Shevchenko became friends with the great Russian revolutionary writers—Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov.

The leaders of Russian revolutionary democracy, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov, had a high opinion of Shevchenko as their associate and companion-in-arms. Dobrolyubov wrote of Shevchenko: "He is absolutely a poet of the people. . . . He came from the people and lived among the people and is bound up with it by the close ties of both intellectual and living kinship."

Shevchenko hated the Russian tsar and the Russian landlord serf-owners. But he had a profound love for the Russian people, Russian writers and revolutionaries who fought, as he did, for the freedom of the people. He revered the memory of the Decembrists, was intimate

with the Petrashevsky circle, was interested in Herzen's magazines, *Polyarnaya Zvezda* and the *Kolokol*, and was a friend of Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov with whom he fought hand in hand for a new life "without the slave and without the landlord." An important influence in the development of Shevchenko's poetical genius was exercised by the distinguished works of Russian literature.

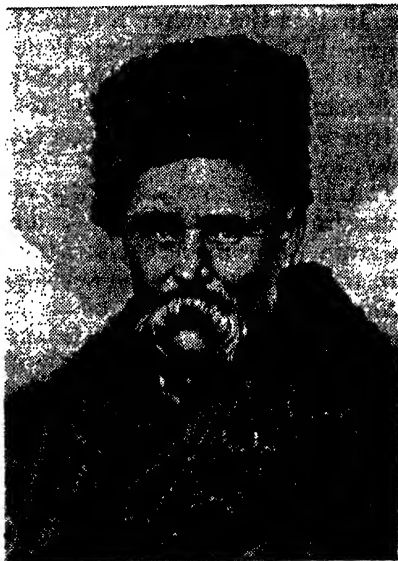
The great Ukrainian poet of the people, the revolutionary-democrat Shevchenko, belongs to the best classics of world literature. Like the great Russian poet Pushkin, Shevchenko is one of the best-loved poets of all the Soviet people.

The cherished dream of the poet has come true. In his remarkable poem *Zapovit*, Shevchenko calls upon the people:

... rise up  
And break your chains in glee!  
And with the oppressors' evil blood sprinkle liberty!  
And when that great new family's born,  
The family of the free,  
O have a kindly and peaceful word  
With which to remember me. \*

Ukrainian art was moulded under the influence of the great cultural heritages of Russia and Western Europe, preserving, however, all its original national characteristics. Ukrainian culture, notwithstanding constant persecution by tsarism, continued to develop in all fields, revealing the powerful creative forces of the Ukrainian people everywhere and in all things: in architecture, painting, sculpture, music and literature.

In the 18th and beginning of the 19th century the Ukrainian landlords had organized orchestras, choirs, and theatrical troupes consisting of serf peasants.



Taras Shevchenko

\* *When I Am Dead*, Trans. by Jack Lindsay, *International Literature*, 1939, No. 3, p. 51.

In 1812 the writer Kvitka-Osnovyanenko organized the first permanent Ukrainian troupe in Poltava. Immense popularity was enjoyed by the musical theatre which performed the first Ukrainian operas *Nataika-Poltavka* by Kotlyarevsky, the *Engagement in Goncharivsi* by Kvitka, *Zaporozhets beyond the Danube* by Gulak-Artemovskiy, and others.

Ukrainian musical works were based on Ukrainian folk songs. Many Russian composers, as for example, Glinka, who came to the Ukraine, also made use of Ukrainian folk songs. Shevchenko played an important part in the development of art in the Ukraine. His play *Nazar Stodolya* (1844) made it clear that the Ukrainian theatre had come to stay. He was the author of many librettos and themes for Ukrainian musical works.

**The Culture of the Peoples of Transcaucasia.** The national awakening of the peoples of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan made vigorous strides.

A great Georgian poet of the early 19th century was A. Chavchavadze, a contemporary of Pushkin. An aristocrat by birth, Alexander Chavchavadze was one of the first representatives of romanticism in Georgian poetry. Georgia's enslavement by Russian tsarism cast an infinite sadness on all the poet's works.

The most talented representative of romanticism in Georgian literature was Nikolai Baratashvili, whose works, while being pessimistic in tone, voice a protest against the harsh realities of life in Georgia. Nikolai Baratashvili is called the "Byron of Georgia."

Georgi Eristavi was the founder of the realistic trend in Georgian literature. In spite of his princely origin, Eristavi was an opponent of serfdom in Georgia. He was Georgia's greatest playwright in the first half of the 19th century and one of the initiators and active organizers of the Georgian dramatic theatre in Tiflis.

The hard lot of the Georgian peasantry and its struggle were portrayed by Daniil Chonkadze, who himself was a serf peasant by origin. His story *The Fortress of Suram*, published in 1859, was the first voice raised in Georgian literature against serfdom. This story was very popular among the Georgian people and had a great influence on later Georgian revolutionary literature.

The national awakening of Armenia, dismembered by Turkey, Persia and Russia, began with particular force after 1828-1829. Many Armenians emigrated to Russia from the regions under Persian and Turkish rule. Tiflis, where the Armenians were an important economic factor, became the centre of the ideological and political life of the rising Armenian bourgeoisie.

The first writer of note in Armenia was Khachatur Abovyan. His splendid novel *Wounds of Armenia*, dealing with the Russo-Persian War, played an important role in the history of the national literature

of Armenia, laying the foundation for a new literary language. This novel of Armenian reality, written with patriotic fervour, depicted in vivid colours the sad lot of the Armenians under Persian rule. The book was privately circulated in manuscript before publication, being read in Armenian social circles and contributing to the awakening of the national self-consciousness of the Armenian people. Abovyan had been educated at Derpt (Yuriev) University. He was an enemy of the reactionary Armenian clergy and founded the first secular school in Armenia. Rating Russian culture highly, Abovyan advocated ideological and political rapprochement with Russia. He and his adherents acquainted the Armenian readers with the best works of Russian and West European literature.

The first half of the 19th century also saw the rise of a new Azerbaijan literature. Its founder, Mirza Akhundov (1812-1878), one of the best writers of his country and age, has been called the "Mussulman Molière." In his comedies he, like Molière, pitilessly flayed the clergy and exposed its hypocrisy and cupidity (in the comedy *Alchemist Mola Ibrahim Halil*). Akhundov was the first in Turkic literature to sharply criticize the absence of rights for women, to demand bourgeois reforms and to call for the enlightenment and the Europeanization of Azerbaijan. He strove to simplify the Turkic language and proposed reforms for the Arab-Turkish alphabet. Akhundov was educated in a Russian school, and Russian literature exercised a great and beneficial influence on his literary works. Akhundov wrote an elegy on the death of Pushkin in which he spoke of his love for the fallen poet. He frequently mentions the founder of the Russian literary language—Lomonosov.



# THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM IN TSARIST RUSSIA

## *Chapter X*

### BOURGEOIS REFORMS OF THE 'SIXTIES

#### 45. PREPARATION OF THE PEASANT REFORM

**The Peasant Reform Fight.** Alexander II (1825-1881), the new emperor, ascended the throne during the Crimean War. While still heir-apparent he had declared himself in favour of the preservation of serfdom and the champion of the interests of the nobility. However, at the very outset of his reign, Alexander II was obliged to adopt a course of bourgeois reforms aiming primarily at the abolition of serfdom.

These reforms were necessitated by the entire trend of Russia's economic development. By the middle of the 19th century the economic disadvantages of forced serf labour both in industry and in agriculture became clearly apparent. The further development of the country's productive forces was impossible without the abolition of serfdom. The Crimean War, too, had proved how urgent was the need for bourgeois reforms, and the determined abolition of serfdom. Furthermore, the widespread growth of peasant unrest, especially during the Crimean War, pointed to the existence of a profound crisis within the country and called imperatively for the elimination of the main cause of this crisis—serfdom.

The peasant movement began to assume ominous proportions as a result of the Crimean War. Peasant economy declined during the war, while landlord exploitation of the serf peasants increased. The class struggle between the peasants and the landlords after the Crimean War became acute. The Third Section registered 86 outbreaks

in 1858, 90 in 1859 and 108 in 1860. These outbreaks were now directed against the entire serfage system and not against individual landlords as hitherto. The peasants everywhere refused to perform the *barshchina* and pay *obrok*, and offered resistance to the authorities and troops sent out to suppress the disturbances.

A revolutionary situation ripened in the country. The peasant movement, however, did not develop into a revolution. "The people, enslaved to the landlords for hundreds of years, were not in a condition to rise to a widespread, open, conscious struggle for freedom."\* The working class was still in its nascency and could not lead the peasantry to the assault of absolutism and serfdom.

The mass struggle of the peasantry provided a stimulus to the bourgeois-liberal movement. The liberal bourgeoisie and landlords began to speak openly of the need for abolishing serfdom. They wrote memoranda to the government and letters to the tsar, drew up schemes of reform, made speeches at private meetings, dinners and banquets. The liberal bourgeoisie and the landlords also criticized the feudal state apparatus with its attendant bribery, arbitrary rule, the censorship, etc.

The menace of a peasant revolution compelled the government to begin preparation for a peasant reform. The need for the abolition of serfdom became apparent even to the tsar and the serf-owning landlords upon whom his power rested.

In 1856 Alexander II made the following statement to the nobles of the Moscow gubernia: "The existing system of the ownership of souls cannot remain unchanged. It is better to begin the abolition of serfdom from above, than wait until it begins to abolish itself from below."

In 1857-1858 gubernia committees of noblemen were organized for the purpose of drafting a law on the abolition of serfdom. Their proposals were sent to St. Petersburg to central commissions organized by the government whose function was to draw up the general law of the reform. These commissions were made up of officials appointed by the government and were presided over by the reactionary General Rostovtsev, notorious in his day for having reported the Decembrists to Nicholas I. After Rostovtsev's death, another reactionary, Duke Panin, was appointed in his place as president of the commissions. Nikolai Milyutin, a representative of the liberal bureaucracy, took a very active part in the drafting of the reform.

All the work of reform was directed by "The Chief Committee of Peasant Affairs," consisting of higher government officials and big serf-owning landlords. These bureaucratic deliberations lasted several years (1857-1860).

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\* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. XV, p. 108, Moscow 1937.



The big landlords, who owned almost half the serfs in the country, proposed freeing the peasants without giving them allotments other than the land on which their houses stood and with the retention for all time of compulsory services in favour of the landlords.

The nobles who owned middle-sized estates were interested in the bourgeois development of agriculture. These landlords, constituting half of all the nobility, owned most of the serfs. They consisted of two basic groups: the owners of *barshchina* and *obrok* peasants. Their interests were different. The *obrok* economy predominated in the non-black-earth regions where not so much the land as serf-ownership was the principal source of income. The landlords allowed their serfs to go and work in the factories or engage in seasonal occupations in return for *obrok*. Therefore, the liberals, such as, for example, the landlords of Tver, proposed the emancipation of peasants with the land, but at a high redemption price, which was to include the serf's personal ransom fee (the Unkovsky draft). For the landlords of the black-earth zone, on the contrary, the greatest value lay in the fertile land on which they carried on their economy by means of the *barshchina*. With a view to retaining the land in their own hands and converting the emancipated peasants into hired labourers, the owners of the *barshchina* estates agreed to the emancipation of the peasants without land. Such was the draft submitted by the landlords of Poltava. Fearing a general uprising of peasantry, the government favoured the allotment of small plots of land to the peasants at a high redemption price.

Despite divergence of interests among the various landlord groups, this was nonetheless a conflict within one and the same class. Both the serf-owners and the liberals were equally interested in averting a peasant revolution and in steering the Russian village, at the price of concessions and compromise, along the peaceful road of gradual bourgeois reforms, while keeping the power and the land in the hands of the landlords.

Such had been the path taken by the Prussian Junker-landlords who had arranged for the gradual evolution of their large feudal economies into bourgeois economies. With the abolition of serfdom in Prussia the landlords appropriated to themselves the peasants' lands. The peasants, deprived of the land, were compelled to work for the landlords as hired labourers on enslaving conditions and sell the scraps of land left them to the rich peasants. The agricultural labourers in Prussia had no rights whatever and were ruled by the landlords on the basis of the Menials' Regulations. The path of development of capitalism in agriculture which preserved the economic and political dominance of the landlords Lenin called the "Prussian" path. It was precisely along this "Prussian" path of capitalist development that the Russian liberals wanted to steer agriculture.

The Russian peasants fought spontaneously but stubbornly for the revolutionary path—for the division of the large landlord estates and the resolute “clearing” of the land of the last vestiges of feudalism, as was the case in the United States of America, where, after the abolition of slavery, capitalism began to develop rapidly in agriculture; capitalist farms developed in place of the former slave-owning plantations and on the vacant lands from which the Indians had been driven off. Owing to the complete absence of feudal survivals the relations between the farmers and the agricultural labourers bore a clearly expressed character of class relations as between capitalists and proletarians. The newly-organized American farms made use of machines and artificial fertilizers. This path of capitalist development in agriculture Lenin called the “American path of development.”

N. G. Chernyshevsky (1828-1889). The peasants, who were chiefly concerned in the abolition of serfdom, were allowed to take no part whatever in the preparation of the reform. Nikolai Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky—the great Russian writer-democrat and great Socialist of the pre-Marxian period, as Lenin called him, championed the interests of the serf peasants in a program of revolutionary democracy.

Chernyshevsky, the son of a priest, was born in Saratov. He received his early schooling in a church seminary and later in the university of St. Petersburg. Chernyshevsky hated the tsarist autocracy which oppressed the Russian people. While still a youth he sought an answer to the tormenting question of society's reorganization in the works of Western and Russian revolutionary writers. Chernyshevsky became a Socialist but his Socialism was of the pre-Marxian, utopian kind. Chernyshevsky mastered the progressive historico-philosophical doctrines of his times and became the follower of the materialist Feuerbach, an immediate predecessor of Marx.

Chernyshevsky held the utopian-socialist belief that the existing peasant *obshchina* would enable Russia to avoid capitalism and pass directly to Socialism. But in order that the *obshchina* fulfil this role, claimed Chernyshevsky, the peasantry must receive, at its emancipation, sufficient land to satisfy its needs. Chernyshevsky could not foresee that the victory of Socialism would be encompassed only as a result of the development of capitalism and the proletariat, through the class struggle of the workers. He “did not succeed in rising, or, rather, owing to the backwardness of Russian life, was unable to rise to the level of the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels.” \*

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\* Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Eng. ed., p. 374, Moscow 1947.



N. G. Chernyshevsky in 1855.  
From a photograph taken by Laufert

Chernyshevsky's socialist views are fully expounded in his novel *What Is To Be Done?* written during his imprisonment in the Fortress of Peter and Paul.

"But Chernyshevsky was not only a utopian socialist," Lenin wrote of him. "He was also a revolutionary democrat; he was able to lend all political events of his epoch a revolutionary spirit, propagandizing the idea of the peasant revolution, the idea of the struggle of the masses for the overthrow of all old powers, overcoming all the obstacles and barriers set up by the censorship."\*

A disciple and successor of the great revolutionary enlightener, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky in 1853 became a contributor to

the magazine *Sovremennik* (*Contemporary*) and afterwards its virtual leader. Under him this magazine became the mouthpiece of revolutionary democracy.

In his articles on the peasant question in the *Sovremennik*, Chernyshevsky elaborated the program of peasant revolution. He demanded the complete abolition of serfdom and the granting to the peasants of personal freedom and all the land without redemption. Chernyshevsky closely watched the progress of the reform and showed that the "emancipation" which tsarism was planning was virtual deception and robbery of the peasants.

He was particularly vehement in his exposure of the liberals who had struck a bargain with the "emperor's party." Chernyshevsky said that no matter who freed the peasant—whether the serf-owning landlords or the liberals, "the result would be equally vile." Chernyshevsky called upon the peasants to rally to the revolution.

Nikolai Alexandrovich Dobrolyubov, Dobrolyubov and Nekrasov—Chernyshevsky's political associates and collaborators on the *Sovremennik*, fought hand in hand with him for a peasant revolution and denounced the treachery of the liberals.

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\* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. XV, p. 144, Moscow 1937.

Dobrolyubov (1836-1861) was a revolutionary democrat and a great Russian literary critic. His critical articles gave a deep analysis of the sociopolitical purport of progressive works of literature, and he was an advocate of realism and a social aim in art. Like Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov was an adherent of the materialist philosophy. In his articles *What is "Oblomovschina"?*, *When Will the Day Come?*, *The Realm of Darkness*, he branded landlord society and the autocratic form of government. Dobrolyubov's satirical verses bitingly exposed and flayed the treachery of the Russian liberals. These verses were printed in the satirical supplement to *Sovremennik*, called *Svistok (The Whistle)*. Dobrolyubov died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-five in the zenith of his great literary talent. His health had been undermined by feverish, tireless work. Nekrasov, in his poem *In Memory of Dobrolyubov*, wrote:

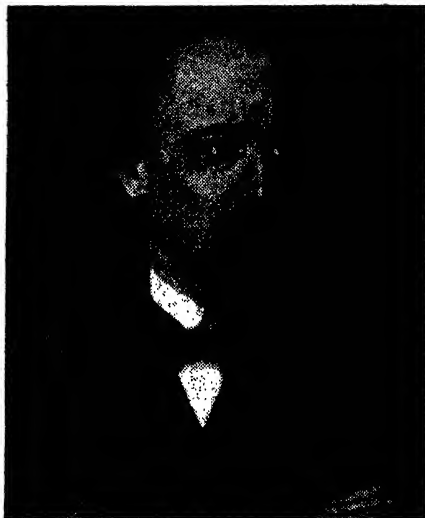


N. A. Dobrolyubov

*Oh, what a lamp of reason ceased to burn,  
Oh, what a heart then ceased to throb!*

**Nikolai Alexeyevich Nekrasov.** The great Russian poet, N. A. Nekrasov (1821-1877), also lived and worked in the days of the peasants' struggle against serfdom. Nekrasov was the son of a landlord, but while still a child he was filled with hatred for serfdom. He broke with his father, who was a serf-owner, and went to St. Petersburg where he lived in great hardship in the squalid dwellings of the poor. Early in the 'forties Nekrasov was introduced to Belinsky's literary circle and, beginning with 1846, published the *Sovremennik*—that militant organ of the revolutionary democracy. Belinsky was the leading light in this magazine.

The years of his collaboration with Belinsky had a decisive influence on Nekrasov. At the end of the 'fifties Nekrasov broke with his former friends, the Westerners—the moderate liberals—and joined



N. A. Nekrasov

the ranks of the resolute fighters for the peasant revolution. Nekrasov was the bard of the long-suffering peasantry. His muse of "revenge and grief" flayed the old Russia of the serf-owners and called upon men to fight for a better life for the people. Nekrasov's verses and poems: *Poet and Citizen*, *Thoughts at the Front Door*, *Songs to Yermushka*, *Knight for an Hour*, *Orina — the Soldier's Mother*, *Red-Nose Frost*, *Grandpa, Who Lives Well in Rūs*, *Russian Women* and others, enjoyed great popularity. Nekrasov exercised a great influence on all the subsequent trend of Russian poetry.

**A. I. Herzen and the Reform Preliminaries.** Herzen's "revolutionary agitation" (as Lenin expressed it) played a tremendous part in the social upsurge on the eve of the reform. In every issue of the *Polyarnaya Zvezda* which Herzen was publishing abroad since 1855, followed in 1857 by the well-known magazine *Kolokol*, Herzen exposed the atrocities of the serf-owners and the tyranny of the bureaucrats. The *Kolokol* printed notes, letters and the drafts of the reform bills drawn up by the liberals in Russia!

Herzen's program of immediate demands was moderate: it called for the emancipation of the peasants with land, freedom of the press, and the abolition of corporal punishment. Herzen believed at the time that the new tsar, Alexander II, would abolish serfdom and give the peasants land and freedom. But in spite of these temporary liberal vacillations, Herzen remained a firm champion of the interests of the peasantry. His position differed radically from that of the liberals who expected the peasants "to be emancipated" only "from above." Herzen declared: "Whether it be emancipation 'from above,' or 'from below' we are for it." These temporary vacillations on the part of Herzen and his reliance on tsarist reforms led to disagreement with the revolutionary democrats. Chernyshevsky and his associates vehemently condemned the mistaken position taken up by Herzen. The letter of "A Russian Man" to Herzen, which Chernyshevsky himself or someone in his circle is supposed to have written, contained a

direct appeal to revolution: "Call Rūs to take up the axe! Farewell, and remember that belief in the good intentions of the tsars has been Russia's ruin for centuries."

#### 46. THE ABOLITION OF SERFDOM

"The Act of February 19." Serfdom was abolished in 1861 at a time when the peasant class struggle against the landlords was at its height. The peasant movement, however, was sporadic and spontaneous. That explains why the serf-proprietors were able to put through the abolition of serfdom in a way that protected their own interests. The manifesto and act abolishing serfdom were signed by Alexander II on February 19, 1861.

This act reflected the bourgeois nature of the reform which was introduced by the serf-owners themselves. The peasants were proclaimed personally free. The landlord could no longer buy, sell or exchange serfs. The landlord could no longer prohibit the peasant from marrying, nor could he interfere in his family affairs. The peasant received the right to make contracts in his own name, to engage in trade and other occupations, own real estate and personalty, and prosecute lawsuits in his own name. The peasant was free to change his social status and become a burgher or a merchant.

The peasant who had been a slave, became juridically a free man, without, however, possessing full civic rights. The peasant's personal dependence upon the landlord was done away with. Non-economic or feudal coercion was replaced by economic, bourgeois, coercion. Herein lay the essential difference between the peasant's new status and his former condition of enslavement and total lack of rights. But the "Act of February 19" retained many vestiges of feudalism in the village and thus ensured the landlord a semi-serf exploitation of the peasantry. The peasant had to pay for the use of his former allotment as before either by personal labour or rent until a redemption contract had been concluded between him and his landlord. Meanwhile the peasants were considered "under temporary obligation." It was not until twenty years after the reform, on December 28, 1881, that a law was passed making the redemption of these peasants' allotments obligatory.

For the purpose of ascertaining the amount of land required for allotment to the peasantry under the "Act of February 19" the Great Russian, Byelorussian and Ukrainian gubernias were divided into three zones. The non-black-earth gubernias comprised the first zone, the black-earth gubernias—the second, and the steppe gubernias—the third. In each of these localities the tsarist government established two rates of allotments—a maximum and minimum rate.

In the rich black-earth zone the peasant received less land than he had had before the reform. The reform deprived the peasants of the black-earth provinces of almost a quarter of the land they had previously cultivated. In some districts the area of peasant tenure contracted still more after the reform: for example, in the Samara gubernia—it was curtailed by 44 per cent; in the Saratov—by 41 per cent and in the Poltava province—by 40 per cent. On the other hand, in the non-black-earth regions the peasants lost less land, and in the distant northern provinces, where the land was of no great value to the landlord, the peasant received additional plots. For example, in the Vologda gubernia they increased their allotments by 14 per cent; in the Vyatka gubernia by 15.5 per cent and in the Olonetsk gubernia by 18.3 per cent. The landlords increased the land allotments to the peasants only in order to obtain more from them by way of rents.

The best lands went to the landlords as did the watering places, pasture and woodlands, etc., which before the reform had been held in common with the peasants. Throughout Russia the landlords deprived the peasants of more than one-fifth of all their lands. These lands were called *otrezki* (cuts).

The average allotment was only 3.3 dessiatins per peasant (per so-called census head) after the reform.

According to a clause included in the "Act of February 19" on the proposal of the serf-owner Gagarin, the landlords could, by agreement with the peasants, make over to them a fourth of the "normal allotment" without compensation and keep the remaining three-quarters for themselves. This was known as the gift or pauper's allotment and amounted, on the average, to about 0.6 of a dessiatin. The gift allotment represented an attempt on the part of the landlord to enslave the peasant.

The landlords deliberately retained a system under which the peasants' land was scattered in strips throughout their own. Not infrequently the landlord's lands cut right into the peasant allotments which they split into parts and the peasant was compelled to lease these landlord wedges at rack-rents.

The peasants had to pay the landlord redemption payments for their freedom and allotments. The value of the land allotted by the landlords to their peasants was approximately 650,000,000 rubles, whereas the peasants had to pay 900,000,000 rubles. The state paid the landlords, while the peasants had to refund this loan to the state with interest in annual instalments over a period of 40 years. Redemption payments by the peasants up to the revolution of 1905 amounted to over 2,000,000,000 rubles. This huge sum thus included both the value of the land and the peasants' ransom fee.

Communal land tenure prevailed over the greater part of Russia. All the allotments of land were held to belong to the community and it

was now the village community that periodically redistributed it among the various peasant households for cultivation. Communal landownership hampered peasant incentive. The redistribution of communal lands did not provide the peasants with a stimulus for making appreciable outlays on improvements of the lands allotted to them. The peasant could leave the *obshchina* and take complete possession of the plot only after he had paid down, in a lump sum, his share of the redemption loan. The peasants were bound by mutual responsibility, i.e., they were responsible for each other with their property for the payment of taxes. Unless he obtained the permission of the authorities, the peasant could not leave the village in order to earn money on the outside. Upon receiving permission to leave for work outside the village he was granted a passport valid for not more than one year, after which he was obliged to return to the village. Until 1870 the peasant had no right to give up his allotment. All these measures kept the peasant attached to the *obshchina* and thus ensured the landlords a supply of cheap, enslaved labour-power. The reform of February 19, 1861 freed over 10,000,000 landlord peasants from serfdom.

The "Act of February 19" also formed the basis of land settlement for the *udelniye* (appanage) and state peasants. There were slightly over a million appanage peasants at the time of the reform. All the lands which they had been cultivating were made over to them (in 1863) as their property on the basis of obligatory redemption. The appanage peasants received 4.2 dessiatins of land per "soul." They had to pay the royal family a total sum of 51,000,000 rubles in redemption payments.

The state peasants numbered over 9,500,000. All the land which they had been cultivating was made over to them for their use in perpetuity (according to the act of 1866). They received an average allotment of 5.7 dessiatins per "soul" and had to pay the state 1,060,000,000 rubles in compensation. The land settlement for the state and appanage peasants was more generous than for the former landlord serfs. The smallest sum of redemption payments was paid out by appanage peasants.

In all, 21,279,000 male peasants were emancipated. Women peasants were freed without ransom, but no land was allotted to them.

The abolition of serfdom was a turning point in Russia's history. The country's economy was becoming capitalistic. Industrial capitalism in Russia developed faster than it had before 1861, in spite of the existing vestiges of serfdom which retarded its progress. The state system of feudal tsarist Russia underwent a slow and steady process of bourgeois reformation. Herein lay the progressive significance of the reform of 1861. "This was," wrote Lenin, "a step towards the transformation of Russia into a bourgeois monarchy."\* But since the reform was carried out by the serf-owners, they tried to retain as many of their

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\* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. XV, p. 143, Moscow 1937.



privileges as possible. Robbed by the landlords, the peasants found themselves entangled in a new form of enslavement, that of economic thrall to the landlords.

**The Struggle of the Peasants after the Reform of 1861.** The reform of February 19 did not satisfy the peasantry, which demanded the transfer to them of all landlord lands without compensation and complete emancipation from the power of the landlords. After the promulgation of the Emancipation Act a peasant movement spread throughout the length and breadth of Russia. In two years alone, 1861-1863, over 2,000 peasant outbreaks were registered. In 400 cases the peasants offered resistance to the troops and were brutally put down. Hundreds of peasants were killed and wounded, thousands received sentences of imprisonment or penal servitude, and tens of thousands were punished by whipping. Rumours spread among the peasants that the "Act of February 19" was not genuine and that the officials and the nobles had hushed up the "real emancipation." The peasants refused to perform their services for the landlords and rejected the "charter rules" which established the extent of the allotment and services. The largest uprisings on these grounds broke out in the villages of Bezdna, in the Kazan gubernia, and Kandeyevka, in the Penza gubernia.

In the Kazan gubernia over one-third of the land had been cut off from the peasants for the benefit of the landlords. The village Bezdna, Spassky uyezd, became the centre of the uprising. The uprising was headed by a peasant named Anton Petrov. The peasants brought the "Act of February 19" to him, since he was the only literate man in the village. Anton Petrov locked himself up in his hut and after spending sleepless nights poring over the act, he declared to the peasants that they must obtain from the tsar the real emancipation which the landlords had hushed up and in the meantime refuse to perform their labour services or pay *obrok*. The peasants of three uyezds rose up under Petrov's leadership, and began to seize the landlords' lands. The movement lasted a whole month. A big punitive expedition was sent out against the rebels under the command of the tsar's aide-de-camp, Count Apraksin. He demanded that Petrov be given up. The peasants surrounded Petrov's hut and refused to allow the soldiers to approach it. Apraksin shot the peasants down killing over a score and wounding 350. Anton Petrov was court-martialled and shot.

The landlords of the Penza gubernia cut off for themselves a quarter of all the peasant lands. The uprising in the village of Kandeyevka began under the slogan: "All the land is ours." The rebel peasants rode through the neighbouring villages with a red banner, calling upon the others to join them. The movement spread over three uyezds of the Penza gubernia and to part of the Tambov gubernia. Troops were sent out against the rebels. The punitive detachments surrounded the peasants in the village of Kandeyevka and shot three rounds. Cries came from the

crowds: "We shall all die to a man but shall not submit." Nor could the wholesale whipping resorted to break their resistance. "Even if you kill us," said the peasants, "we won't go to work, and don't want to pay *obrok*." Eight peasants were killed in Kandeyevka, 27 wounded, and 108 beaten with ramrods, sentenced to penal servitude or exiled.

The Revolutionary "*Raznochints*!" of the 'Sixties. The struggle of the peasants for land and freedom was supported by the revolutionary movement of the intellectuals, the democratic *Raznochints* who had come to take the place of the revolutionary nobles. The *Raznochints* were the children of the burghers, petty officials, the lower strata of the clergy and ruined nobles. The "Act of February 19" (1861) aroused great indignation among these democratic elements. Demonstrations of protest were organized by the university students of St. Petersburg and Kazan in the summer and particularly in the autumn of 1861. The alarmed authorities saw in this activity of the youth the beginning of a revolution. The military were resorted to to suppress the meetings of students at the St. Petersburg University. About 300 students were arrested and imprisoned in the fortress of Kronstadt. Revolutionary sentiment waxed stronger. Secret revolutionary circles for struggle against tsarism were organized among the youth.

The leaders of the revolutionary movement of the *Raznochints*-democrats were Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov. The *Sovremennik* (*Contemporary*), a magazine edited by Chernyshevsky, was the ideological organizing centre of this movement. The mighty revolutionary words of the great writer-democrat roused the best people of the 'sixties to a struggle against the feudal autocracy. In 1861 a proclamation was issued by Chernyshevsky's circle, written in a simple, popular style, entitled "Greetings to the Manorial Peasants from Their Well-Wishers." The proclamation exposed the deal which the tsar had made with the landlords and called upon the peasants to rally together and make organized preparations for an uprising against them. At the same time Chernyshevsky's friend, N. V. Shelgunov, wrote a proclamation "To the Soldiers." Neither of these proclamations were printed because they fell into the hands of the Third Section in manuscript form.

Another proclamation addressed "To the Young Generation," written by N. V. Shelgunov and printed in Herzen's London printshop, was circulated by Chernyshevsky's revolutionary circle. This proclamation called upon the youth to carry on revolutionary propaganda among the peasants and soldiers. The well-known poet, M. L. Mikhailov, was arrested and sentenced to a term of penal servitude for distributing this proclamation. In the spring of 1862 the proclamation "Young Russia," written by the student revolutionary Zaichnevsky, was issued in Moscow. Like Shelgunov, Zaichnevsky visualized the revolutionary youth as the main force of the revolution and called upon it to rise in arms and destroy the ruling classes.

In the beginning of the 'sixties (1861-1863) the first big revolutionary secret society *Zemlya i Volya* (*Land and Freedom*) was organized. Its founders were a group of writers associated with the *Sovremennik*, the revolutionary-democrats Serno-Solovyovich, Obruchev, Sleptsov and others, all members of Chernyshevsky's circle.

Chernyshevsky was the ideological leader and fount of inspiration for the entire revolutionary-democratic movement in the country during the period of preparation and enforcement of the peasant reform. The tsarist government resorted to a whole system of provocation and falsification to frame a case against Chernyshevsky on the charge of being the author of the proclamation to the "Manorial Peasants," and chiefly for his "adherence to materialist and revolutionary ideas." After keeping Chernyshevsky confined for two years in the Fortress of Peter and Paul the government condemned this irreconcilable fighter against autocracy, the leader of the peasant revolution, to 14 years' penal servitude and perpetual banishment to Siberia. Before Chernyshevsky was sent off to serve his sentence he was subjected to the medieval rite of civil execution on May 19, 1864. The hangmen led Chernyshevsky to the scaffold on Mytninskaya Square in St. Petersburg, made him kneel down, broke a sword over his head and then chained him to the pillory. Chernyshevsky stood calmly under the rain waiting for this mockery to come to an end. When he was being led down from the scaffold a girl in the crowd threw him some flowers and was immediately arrested for it.

Chernyshevsky was sent to the Nerchinsk convict prison. When his term of penal servitude, which had been reduced to seven years, came to an end, Chernyshevsky, at the direct orders of Alexander II, was again imprisoned in the remote Siberian town of Vilyuisk. In 1883 he was taken from the Vilyuisk prison to Astrakhan. And only twenty-seven years after his arrest, in 1889, was Chernyshevsky permitted to return to his native city of Saratov. He was already past sixty then. His health broken by prison and exile, N. G. Chernyshevsky died in October 1889 in Saratov. The great Russian revolutionary-democrat Chernyshevsky had spent almost half of his life confined in a fortress, a convict prison, the Vilyuisk prison and in exile. Thus did tsarism avenge itself on its irreconcilable enemy.

N. G. Chernyshevsky was a great Russian patriot who gave up his whole life to his country and his people. While still a youth Chernyshevsky wrote: "To contribute to the eternal, intransient glory of my country and to the good of humanity—what could be greater and more desirable?" All his life he selflessly served those ends.

Chernyshevsky was a great scholar and democrat, a passionate propagandist of scientific knowledge. Marx and Engels regarded Chernyshevsky as a great Russian scientist. They wrote that his economic works "do real honour to Russia." Chernyshevsky's book *Re-*



The Civil Execution of Chernyshevsky

*marks on the Political Economy of Mills* was highly appraised by Marx. Lenin also regarded Chernyshevsky as a "remarkably profound critic of capitalism." Chernyshevsky was also a literary critic and one of the authors of the materialist theory of aesthetics. The books of Chernyshevsky were withdrawn from circulation by the tsarist authorities after he had been sentenced.

Lenin called the revolutionaries of the 'forties to the 'sixties—Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov, Pisarev and others—enlighteners, because their literary activity contributed to the political enlightenment of Russia. In the period when the working class of Russia was still in its infancy and had, therefore, not come forward as the vanguard of revolution, the enlighteners were fighters against tsarist autocracy and serfdom.

**Zemstvo and Municipal, Judicial and Military Reforms.** After the abolition of serfdom tsarism was compelled to introduce other bourgeois reforms designed to adapt the autocratic-police system of Russia to the needs of capitalist evolution. The elective zemstvos and municipal dumas set up by the government admitted representatives of the bourgeoisie and peasantry besides the nobility. Lenin, writing about the zemstvos and the municipal dumas said that they

were "the beginning of local representative institutions of the bourgeoisie."\*

In 1864 uyezd and gubernia zemstvos were established, being organs of local self-government which handled purely local affairs concerned with the rural population (road building, the building of hospitals, schools, etc.). The uyezd and gubernia zemstvos consisted of a representative council called the *zemskoye sobraniye* and an executive board, the *zemskaya uprava* elected by the former and presided over by a representative of the landed nobility. Representation on the zemstvo was restricted by qualifications of land-ownership which placed the zemstvo completely under the control of the big landowners.

The uyezd zemstvo deputies were elected by the landlords and the peasants as well as by propertied burghers, i.e., by the bourgeoisie. The delegates elected at the village assemblies elected deputies from the peasants. The peasants were usually compelled under administrative pressure to elect the *kulaks*, i.e., the rural bourgeoisie, as deputies. The gubernia deputies were elected by the uyezd zemstvo councils. The zemstvo executive board and its chairman were elected at zemstvo meetings and confirmed by the governor. The zemstvo was controlled by the landed nobility in its own class interests. A striking illustration of this is the fact that the peasants paid twice as much as the landlords in zemstvo taxes per dessiatin of land. Roads were built in the landlords' interests and medical services were opened in the vicinity of their estates.

There were no good local roads at all before the zemstvo reform, only wretched country lanes. The roads laid by the zemstvos contributed to the growth of capitalism. The zemstvos in the 'seventies started the building of railways and the establishment of banks, thus further contributing to the development of capitalism. All the activities of the zemstvos as elective organizations were under the constant supervision of the governors.

In 1870 municipal dumas consisting of the municipal deputies elected by owners of houses, merchants and manufacturers, as well as high taxpayers in the towns, replaced the municipal дума of six deputies established under Catherine II. The municipal dumas were controlled by the bourgeoisie and operated in its class interests. This was strikingly borne out by the wretched housing conditions in the quarters where the city poor lived. The municipal дума elected its executive body—the municipal executive board called the *gorodskaya uprava*—headed by a mayor. The municipal dumas were under the supervision of the governors.

In 1864 the judicial system was also reformed. The former, pre-reform feudal court, with its complete absence of publicity and oral pro-

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\* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. XIV, p. 16, Moscow 1937.

cedure, was replaced by a new, bourgeois court. Hearings were now held in public, and procedure was conducted orally at the court sittings. A jury consisting of members of the nobility, and the urban and rural bourgeoisie was introduced for criminal cases on the circuit courts. The accused were defended by lawyers, and the suit was carried on by a public prosecutor. Petty cases were handled by courts of justices of the peace. The municipal dumas and the zemstvos elected the justices of the peace from among the big landlords and house-owners. Volost courts were established in the countryside for peasants only and these courts could inflict corporal punishment on the peasants. Civil cases were also decided publicly with the participation of both parties, i.e., of representatives of the plaintiff and the defendant. The civil courts were governed by new laws which protected property rights on the instruments and means of production both of the landlords and the capitalists.

The judicial reform introduced by the government was based on models of West European bourgeois courts and was the most bourgeois of all the reforms of the 'sixties, since the new courts protected the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Political cases were handled by the *Sudebnaya Palata* and the Senate, as well as by the military tribunals. More often than not, however, political cases were decided administratively: arrested revolutionaries were summarily exiled to Siberia or to the north of Russia without trial or examination.

In 1874 the tsarist government carried out a military reform. Compulsory military service for all estates was introduced in place of the former recruiting system. Youths were called up on reaching the age of 21. Part of the conscripted men were enrolled for military service; others (depending on domestic circumstances) were kept in the reserve. The term of service was set at six years, after which the soldier was transferred to the reserve. For those who had received an education (i.e., primarily representatives of the propertied classes—the landlords and the bourgeoisie) the term of service was considerably reduced.

Though protecting the interests of the landlords, the bourgeois reforms of the 'sixties at the same time opened wide the road to the development of capitalism in Russia.

Tsarist Russia took the first steps towards its transformation into a bourgeois monarchy.

Obliged as it was against its will to introduce the bourgeois reform of the 'sixties, tsarism nevertheless did not relinquish its reactionary policy, which was especially pronounced in the field of education. In 1871, at the direction of the reactionary Minister of Education, Count D. Tolstoy, the classical *gymnasium* was founded, with the dead languages (Latin and Greek) as its principal subjects. The teaching of

natural sciences was completely banned in the *gymnasium*, while the curriculum of mathematics and Russian were greatly curtailed. The primary zemstvo schools and their teachers were under the strict police surveillance of the government school inspectors.

#### 47. THE RISING OF 1863 IN POLAND

**Poland on the Eve of the Uprising.** Poland in the middle of the 19th century experienced an economic and social upsurge. Capitalism made considerable progress. Big factories sprang up. Industrial centres grew up in Warsaw, Żyrardów and Łódź. The Dąbrowa coal district developed rapidly. Polish landlords introduced industrial crops in agriculture: potatoes for distilling purposes and beet for the sugar industry.

The agrarian question grew very acute in Poland in the 'fifties. The Polish peasants had been deprived of land since 1807, the year of their emancipation from serfdom. The dearth of land induced the peasants to leave *en masse* for the cities in quest of a livelihood, a movement which was especially intensified in the 'fifties and 'sixties. The industrial crisis at the beginning of the 'sixties led to the closing down of many factories and mills, with an attendant rise in unemployment, and growth of the revolutionary temper of the Polish workers and peasants. At the same time there was a growth of the revolutionary movement among the Polish gentry and the rising bourgeoisie, who chafed under the burden of their dependency on tsarist Russia. The defeat of tsarism in the Crimean War intensified the revolutionary movement in Poland still more.

In 1861-1862 an extensive national movement developed in Poland. Demonstrative public requiems were held in memory of the leaders of the Polish uprising of 1830-1831. The streets of Warsaw became the scenes of patriotic demonstrations. Some of them ended in the shooting down of the demonstrators by tsarist troops, which still more enraged the Poles against tsarism.

In 1862 a "Centralny Komitet Narodowy" was formed in Warsaw, which was supported by a revolutionary organization called the "Red Party." This party consisted of representatives of the ruined petty gentry and the petty bourgeoisie. Another active political organization of the Polish landlords was the so-called "White Party." Contention for the leadership of the uprising and the nature of the uprising itself—its program and tactics—became the objects of a bitter struggle between the "Reds" and the "Whites."

In order to remove the revolutionary elements the tsarist government enrolled the young men in the cities in a special recruitment list. To avoid conscription the revolutionary youth took to the woods.

where they organized guerilla detachments. Workers and artisans took an active part in these detachments.

**The Rising of 1863.** After the publication of the recruitment ukase an uprising broke out simultaneously in 15 places in Poland in January 1863. The "Centralny Komitet Narodowy" which led the uprisings proclaimed itself the revolutionary government (*Rząd Narodowy*). An underground revolutionary government of Poland existed in Warsaw for a period of fifteen months. At the end of January 1863 it issued a manifesto transferring to the peasants all the landlord lands which they had previously cultivated. Simultaneously it issued a decree for the organization of a popular levy. The Polish peasants enthusiastically joined the partisan detachments. However, the new government, consisting for the most part of the gentry, were scared at the prospect of a peasant war, and revoked the decree concerning the popular levy, ordering the peasants to return to their homes. This counter-revolutionary measure considerably weakened the uprising. The Polish gentry placed all their hopes on the intervention of Napoleon III and other states in defence of Poland. But they did not receive the promised assistance either from France or Austria. Alexander II came to an agreement with the king of Prussia for their joint suppression of the Polish uprising, and, mustering a huge army, he moved against rebellious Poland.

The uprising spread from Poland to Lithuania, Byelorussia and the adjacent regions of Ukraine. A Lithuanian-Byelorussian Chervoni (Red) *Rząd* was organized in Vilno to lead the uprising. Here, as in Poland, the gentry in the government hampered the movement. The peasants of Lithuania and Byelorussia, armed with scythes and axes, came out against the landlords, both Russian and Polish. The organizer and leader of the peasant uprising in Byelorussia was Kastus Kalinovsky. He appealed in the Byelorussian language directly to the Byelorussian peasants, wronged and oppressed by the landlords and tsarist authorities. Kalinovsky demanded a democratic system of government for a free Byelorussia and agrarian reforms for the peasants. Another of Kalinovsky's merits was the fact that he propagandized in every way the Byelorussian language. He championed the right of the Byelorussian peasants to absolute political equality with the landlords. That is why the "Whites" turned Kalinovsky over to the tsarist hangmen. Standing at the gallows listening to his sentence in which he was called "Squire Kalinovsky," he exclaimed indignantly: "There are no squires among us—we are all equal."

The attempt to start a rebellion in the Ukraine failed because the Ukrainian peasants refused to support the Polish gentry.

The uprising in Lithuania and Byelorussia was suppressed by the notorious Muravyov—the hanger with ruthless executions and reprisals. During the suppression of the Polish uprising of 1830-1831.



he had said of himself that he was not one of the Muravyovs who are hanged but one of those who do the hanging. The nickname "hanger" clung to this executioner of the Polish, Lithuanian and Byelorussian people for all time. He crushed the uprisings in Lithuania and Byelorussia by executions, exile to Siberia, the confiscation of estates and the burning of villages. He put to death the leader of the rebel Zhmud (Lithuanian) peasants, Serakovsky, a friend and associate of Chernyshevsky, and the leader of the rebel Byelorussian peasants, Kastus Kalinovsky, as well as hundreds of participants in the uprising.

The suppressors of Poland adopted the same methods as Muravyov-the-hanger. The rebels carried on guerilla warfare against the tsarist troops, who wreaked savage reprisals on the revolutionaries when they fell into their hands. Wroblewski and Dąbrowski—the future defenders and heroes of the Paris Commune—were among the outstanding revolutionary officers.

Only by the end of April 1865, 28 months after the uprising started, did the tsarist troops wipe out the last rebel detachment. One thousand five hundred people were executed during the suppression of the uprising in Poland. Many thousands of Poles were sent to Siberia and 30,000 rebels were killed in battle.

The Russian officials in Poland pursued an inflexible policy of forcible Russification. Tsarism even tried to erase the very name of Poland by changing it to the Warsaw General-Governorship, or the Provinces of the Vistula.

While all the forces of Russian and European reaction were directed to crushing the uprising in Poland, Russian revolutionary democrats headed by Herzen gave their ardent support to the struggle of the Polish people for liberation. Not wishing to take part in the suppression of the uprising some Russian officers retired from the army. Others took part in the armed struggle of the Poles against tsarism. The secret society *Zemlya i Volya* leagued itself with the Lithuanian-Byelorussian Red Rzad for a joint struggle against tsarism under the slogan: "For Your Freedom and Ours." Herzen in the *Kolokol* staunchly championed the cause of freedom for Poland, and castigated her torturers, executioners and hangmen.

Western European workers, led by Marx and Engels, enthusiastically hailed the struggle of the Polish people for freedom and independence. Marx and Engels wrote in 1881: "The Polish uprising of 1863, which led to the joint protest of the English and French workers against the international crimes of their governments, served as the starting point of the International which was founded with the participation of the Polish exiles."\*

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\* Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. IV, p. 551, Moscow 1937.

#### 48. THE PEASANT REFORM IN THE NATIONAL REGIONS

##### **Peasant Reform in Lithuania, Byelorussia, Ukraine and Poland.**

Serfdom in Lithuania and Byelorussia was abolished in 1861. A special local "Act of February 19" was promulgated for Lithuania and Byelorussia which took into consideration the specific features of serfdom in these gubernias. Preparatory to the abolition of serfdom the landlords—for the most part the Poles—took away the land from many Byelorussian and Lithuanian peasants and rented it out. On the abolition of serfdom the landlords left the serf peasants with very little land. Such was the situation until the uprising of 1863.

To win over the peasants of Lithuania and Byelorussia during the uprising of 1863 tsarism carried out an agrarian reform. The obligatory redemption of allotments at lowered rates was introduced. The allotments became the property of the peasants. All peasant liabilities to the landlords were cancelled. Thus the peasant allotments in Lithuania and Northern Byelorussia were considerably increased at the expense of the Polish landlords.

This reform was further extended to cover the rest of Byelorussia and Western Ukraine where very large Polish landholdings existed. Redemption payments were reduced by half.

After crushing the Polish uprising, the tsarist government introduced, in 1864, a peasant reform in Poland. This reform differed considerably from that of 1861 in Russia. All compulsory services by the peasant for the landlord were abolished and all suits for recovery of arrears from the peasants were discontinued. The land which the peasants had been cultivating before the reform now became their personal property. All land which had been taken away from the peasants by the landlords since 1846 was likewise turned over to the peasants. The landless peasants were also provided with land. The landholdings of the Polish peasants increased by 30 per cent.

The Polish landlords received compensation for the land which had been turned over to the peasants directly from the state treasury. There was no direct redemption of the land received by the peasants in Poland. Instead the tsarist government practically doubled the rates of taxation payable by the peasants. Fewer vestiges of feudalism were retained in Poland after the reform than in Russia. The Polish landlords, however, still remained big proprietors of land while the bulk of the Polish peasantry was left in direct economic dependence upon them.

##### **Peasant Reform in Transcaucasia and the Northern Caucasus.**

In the second half of the 19th century tsarism embarked on the extensive economic development of the Northern Caucasus and Transcaucasia. With the development of commodity-money relations and the incessant peasant disturbances the liquidation of serfdom

in this colony of tsarism became a pressing need. In 1857 a widespread peasant uprising, under the leadership of the blacksmith Utu Mikav, broke out in Mingrelia. The peasants fought against the colonial oppression of tsarism and feudal exploitation. Alarmed by the uprising in Mingrelia the tsarist government was compelled to introduce a peasant reform in Georgia. The Georgian feudal landlords did their utmost to obstruct the introduction of the reform. The abolition of serfdom in Transcaucasia, and especially in Georgia, was carried out to the advantage of the landlords and with ruinous results to the peasants. The petty landed nobles in Georgia were released entirely of any obligation to provide the peasants with allotments, and the *otrezki* (cuts) were very great throughout Georgia. Thus in the gubernia of Tiflis the peasants were deprived of more than 40 per cent of the land. The meagre peasant plots were scattered in strips throughout the landlords' holdings. The peasants were deprived of woodlands and pasturage for their cattle. In the arid regions the peasants could not use the water without the permission of the landlords. The peasants were compelled to pay high redemption prices for the scraps of land which they received after the reform. Until the redemption contract had been concluded the peasants were under a temporary obligation to render services to the landlords and were compelled to yield the prince-landlord one-quarter of their harvest of grain and grapes and one-third of their hay crop. The peasant had to pay annual rent on his farm amounting to 5 per cent its value. Most of the peasants of Georgia remained temporarily obligated to the landlords right up to 1912 when a law was passed making redemption compulsory.

Thus, after the reform, the ~~peasants~~ of Georgia continued to pay rents and render forced labour services to the landlord. In addition, they were obliged to make gifts to the landlord and work on his estate several days in the year. If the peasant did not make his payments in due time the landlord took away whatever property he had and sometimes his plot of land as well.

The peasantry of Guria suffered most of all by the abolition of serfdom. A Guria peasant aptly described his position in the following words: "When I go to sleep my head rests in the estate of one landlord prince and my feet in that of another."

The peasant reforms of the 'sixties did not affect the *khizans* (the fugitive peasants), and the mountaineers who had, since time immemorial, descended into the valleys and settled on the lands of the landlords. The *khizans* paid the landlords from one-tenth to one-sixth of their crops. After the reform the landlords, in connection with the rise in lease values, tried to raise rentals and modify the terms of contract with the *khizans*. Frequently the landlords drove them out of their old homesteads.

The peasants of Abkhazia refused to be reconciled to the alienation

of the best lands by the landowners for whom they were compelled to perform labour services, and in 1866 rose in a rebellion which soon spread throughout the country. The rebels, bearing red flags, captured the city of Sukhum. The tsarist government sent out a force of 8,000 soldiers against the rebel Abkhazians, and the rising was crushed with great brutality. This uprising compelled tsarism in 1870 to introduce a peasant reform in Abkhazia as well. By the law of 1870 every landlord received up to 250 dessiatins of land while the peasants received an allotment only of 3 to 7 dessiatins per household, in which was included inarable land. The result of this "reform" was to create an acute land hunger among the Abkhazians. Even the tsarist officials were compelled to admit that only the mountain rocks and swamps had been left to the Abkhazian peasants.

In 1870 the tsarist government also abolished serfdom in Azerbaijan and in the greater part of Armenia. The Act of 1870 obligated the landlords to provide the peasants with the use of a farmstead, tillage and pasturage, the landlord, however, being entitled to retain for himself a considerable part of the old allotments (the *otrezki*). The peasants had the right to redeem the allotments without the consent of the landlords, but they did not receive a government loan, as the peasants had in Russia. The peasant could, if he wished, refuse to take any allotment at all, a thing that was not permitted in Russia.

The uprising of the Chechen in 1867 compelled the tsarist government to abolish serfdom and slavery among the mountaineers of the Caucasus. This "reform" was tantamount to absolute robbery of the peasant mountaineers in favour of the feudal princes. Though the slaves and serfs were freed, this emancipation was carried through without the allotment of land, and for a ransom of 250 rubles. Until this ransom had been paid both slaves and serfs were obliged to perform labour services for the landlord which sometimes ran into five days out of the week.

The result of this "reform" was to leave the peasant-mountaineers mere scraps of land around their houses, amounting to from 0.25 to 0.4 dessiatins. The landlords deprived the peasants of all pasture lands which, in the Caucasus, constituted the main source of existence for the mountaineers. Thus the former serf peasants and slaves again found themselves in thrall to their former landlords.

**The Condition of the Peasants in Other National Regions.** Not even this kind of "reform" was introduced everywhere in Russia. In the Kalmuck regions serfdom was retained until 1892, while in Central Asia, Khiva and Bokhara, the survivals of serfdom and slavery existed until the establishment there of the Soviet government.

The zemstvo and judicial reforms of the 'sixties were not applied in the national regions. Government-appointed law courts functioned in these regions, where trial by jury was unknown. Local courts in the

Mussulman regions were left in the hands of judges from among the priesthood, whose judgments were based on the Koran. Proceedings were carried on in Russian. Not even the zemstvo was introduced here.

All power in the outlying regions was wielded by the tsarist officers and colonizers. In the Caucasus and Central Asia the administration pursued a policy of ruthless terrorism and the plundering of the local national peasant population. In this they were assisted by the local feudal lords. These types of tsarist colonizers were stigmatized by the great Russian satirist, Saltykov-Shchedrin, in his book *Messrs. Tashkentsi*.

## Chapter XI

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF CAPITALISM IN THE 'SIXTIES AND 'SEVENTIES

## 49. CAPITALISM IN AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY AFTER THE PEASANT REFORM

**Specific Features of Capitalist Development after the Reform.** During the first decades following the reform capitalism in Russia developed rather slowly both in industry and agriculture. Compared to the other capitalist countries of Europe and America tsarist Russia was extremely backward technically and economically. The relics of serfdom that remained in the village after the reform of 1861 retarded the development of capitalism, as did also the obsolete autocratic state system of the nobility.

**Agriculture after the Reform.** The reform of 1861 left intact the root of agriculture's economic backwardness—the landlord *latifundia*, i.e., vast estates run mainly on semi-feudal lines.

After the peasant reform the peasant found himself land-starved. This and the fact that his allotment was cut up into strips, that he was deprived of meadowlands and overburdened by tsarist taxes, forced the peasant to rent tillage, pasture lands and hayfields from the landlord. In return he was compelled to work the landlords' tilths with his own implements. This was the old feudal system of *barshchina* in the new guise of *otrabotka* (labour rent). Another form of this system was *ispolshchina* (share-cropping) under which the peasant paid the landlord half of his crop in kind for the land rented.

Taking advantage of the destitution of the peasants the landlords and the kulaks hired them as labourers in the middle of the

winter when most of the peasants were running short of corn. Receiving an advance of grain or flour or a deposit on account of his wretchedly low wages the peasant would sell himself out in winter to do all the summer field work.

The bulk of the peasantry (the poor and middle peasants) were so heavily exploited by the landlords that they could do nothing at all to improve their own farms. The landlords' economy amassing as it did huge profits through the semi-serf exploitation of the peasants evolved very slowly into a capitalist economy.

The *otrabotka* system of economy still prevailed in the central provinces of Russia when capitalist agriculture began to develop in the Ukraine and the Volga region. The lands of the ruined landlords were bought up by the urban bourgeoisie and the kulaks. Within twenty years (1861-1881) the bankrupt landlords had sold more than 16,500,000 dessiatins of land. The natural economy of the peasants was transformed into a petty commodity economy. The peasants were compelled to sell corn, frequently by reducing the amount of their own consumption. Property inequality increased in the villages with an attendant increase in class differentiation. A small group of rural bourgeoisie—the kulaks—sprang up from the ranks of the middle peasantry. The greater part of the middle peasantry were reduced to ruin and joined the ranks of the rural proletariat and semi-proletariat, a "class of hired workers with a plot of land," as Lenin called them. By the beginning of the 'eighties no less than half of all the peasant households consisted of poor peasants with no horses or one horse. The periodic famines which recurred about once in every three years augmented the numbers of the village poor by ruined middle peasants.

The peasant bourgeoisie or the kulaks accumulated capital by money-lending and exploitation of the peasant poor. In the autumn when tax payments fell due the poor and middle peasants would take their corn to market and naturally the price of grain would drop. The kulaks took advantage of this to buy up corn cheaply. By January the poor peasant ran short of corn and would resort to the kulak for a loan. For each sack of corn borrowed he had to return two or more in the autumn or else cultivate a patch of the kulak's land. Frequently loans were given at an annual interest of 500 to 800 per cent. The poor peasant found himself hopelessly enslaved to the kulak. The credit received by him in the kulak's shop and pothouse involved him still more. On such predatory exploitation of the peasant poor did the Kolupayevs and Razuvayevs described by Saltykov-Shchedrin, the great Russian satirist, build up their fortunes. The capital thus accumulated was invested either in trade and industry or applied to promoting capitalist agriculture. The kulak made extensive use of hired labour and up-to-date agricultural implements (the plough, the reaper, the thresher) on his farm.

The abolition of serfdom contributed to the penetration of capitalism into the Ukrainian village as well. The peasantry there was also undergoing a process of class differentiation and formation of a rural bourgeoisie—the kulaks.

The kulak farms in the Ukrainian steppelands extensively employed machines and hired labour.

The landlords preferred to lease large tracts of land to the kulaks for a term of several years, and the latter, in turn, rented it out in small plots to the landless peasants, usually for a year. Thus the Ukrainian peasant found himself under a double yoke—that of the landlords and of the kulaks. The peasant was obliged to pay a fixed number of cornricks for every dessiatin of land he rented. This was called *skopshchina*, a form of share-cropping, and sometimes amounted to as much as three-quarters of the crops.

Particularly hard was the lot of the Ukrainian peasants in the territories west of the Dnieper where, after the abolition of serfdom, they lost the use of woodlands, waters and pasture lands.

Capitalism made considerably slower progress during the 'sixties and 'seventies in the agriculture of Byelorussia. Here, as in the rest of Russia after the peasant reform, large landlord tenure prevailed, represented for the greater part by Polish landowners. It differed however from the rest of Russia in that Byelorussian large landlord tenure quickly adapted itself to the new economic conditions, and landownership not only did not decrease but expanded still further at the expense of the middle and small landlords, becoming a capitalist agricultural enterprise of the Prussian type. The absence of industry or other means of employment aggravated the position of the Byelorussian peasants still more. The only occupations available outside the oppressive work on the landlords' estates were lumbering or timber-floating.

Capitalism also struck root in agriculture in Georgia after the reform. The contradictions between the mass of the peasantry and the kulaks in the village grew more acute, and the process of differentiation among the peasants proceeded apace.

In some uyezds in Georgia as much as 80 to 90 per cent of all the sheep were concentrated in the hands of the rural bourgeoisie. The peasants, being in constant need of money, borrowed loans from the money-lenders who exacted as much as 200-300 per cent in interest. The Georgian village was on the verge of extinction. A tsarist general sent to Kakhetia to ascertain the causes of the peasant unrest was obliged to admit that the peasants were absolutely pauperized. "I myself know," he wrote, "a great number of peasant families which eat bread only every other day in winter and sometimes only once in three days because they have no corn of their own and have to live from hand to mouth."

Lenin in his great work *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* showed that after 1861 capitalism developed both on the landlord estates and peasant farms.

It could develop in two different ways: either by the transformation of the landlord economies into bourgeois economies retaining the system of oppressive exploitation of the peasants (as in Prussia), or by the revolutionary abolition of landlord tenure and the free development of peasant economies along farmer lines (as in the case of America). The landlords and the bourgeoisie steered the advance of capitalism along the Prussian evolutionary path. The peasantry, on the other hand, struggled spontaneously for the American, revolutionary path.

**The Development of Capitalism in Industry.** Capitalism developed at a much faster rate in industry than in agriculture after the reform of 1861. However, good means of communication were an essential requisite for the development of capitalism and there were but few of these in feudal Russia. Suffice to say that in 1861 there was a total of only 1,488 versts of railway lines throughout the vast Russian empire. In the first decade after the reform two-thirds of available capital were invested in railway construction. From 1861 to 1881—a period of twenty years—19,500 versts of railways were built. The 'sixties and 'seventies witnessed a great railway boom. Granted concessions by the government, i.e., monopoly rights to build railways, important officials or landlords resold these concessions to Russian and foreign capitalists for large sums. Thus, French capital held a monopoly on the construction of railways in the 'fifties and organized in Russia a special railway company which at one time was granted the right to exploit all existing railroads.

Notable progress was made after 1861 in the textile industry. The production of textile goods increased threefold between 1861 and 1881. Large-scale machine industry won the race against capitalist manufactories, and weaving mills forced handicraft weaving out of the field.

Heavy industry developed more slowly than the textile industry. An impetus to its development was given by railway construction. The first blast furnace, built by British capital, was blown in at Yuzovka (now Stalino) in 1871. The southern works, built chiefly by foreign capital, began to manufacture rails and other railway equipment which had previously been imported. In the forty years following the reform—from 1861 to 1900—pig-iron production and petroleum output increased very considerably—almost tenfold.

Metallurgy in the Ukraine was still taking its first steps in the 'seventies. Coal output in the Ukraine increased considerably for this period—fifteenfold between 1861 to 1881.



The sugar refineries and distilleries were the leading branches of industry in the Ukraine at the time. The area under potatoes for distilling purposes on the landlord estates west of the Dnieper was enlarged. There was also a considerable increase in beet cultivation for the sugar refineries. Seasonal "sugar" employment, as well as seasonal "steppe" employment in the capacity of agricultural labourers were at that time the main sources of the peasants' miserable earnings in the Ukraine.

Industry in Transcaucasia developed rather slowly. There were only some small enterprises in the gubernia of Tiflis. The first mechanical factory in Tiflis was founded by the English. In 1865 the first large textile mill was built.

The construction of the Transcaucasian railway was of great economic importance to Georgia and to Transcaucasia as a whole. The first railway traffic was opened in 1872 between Poti and Tiflis.

Lenin pointed out that the development of capitalism in Russia proceeded on an intensive and extensive scale. Intensive development of capitalism signified the further growth of capitalist industry, capitalist agriculture and of the internal market in the main central area of Russia. Its extensive development signified the spread of capitalism to new territories, to the colonies.

Tsarism did its utmost, in the interests of the Russian manufacturers and millowners, to hamper the development of industry in its colonies—the national regions. In this way it kept the markets open for Russian manufactures and pumped the raw material out of the colonies.

Lenin emphasized the fact that capitalism's intensive development was retarded by the colonization of the outlying regions. The existing survivals of serfdom and poverty of the population narrowed the internal market and thus made a search for foreign markets imperative. "If Russian capitalism," wrote Lenin, "were unable to expand beyond the limits of the territory it has occupied since the beginning of the post-Reform period, this contradiction between capitalist large-scale industry and the archaic institutions in rural life (the tying down of the peasant to the land, etc.) would very soon have led to the abolition of these institutions and to the complete clearing of the path of agricultural capitalism in Russia. But the possibility of seeking and finding a market in the outlying regions which are being colonized (for the manufacturer), the possibility of moving to new territories (for the peasants) softens this contradiction. . . . It goes without saying," Lenin added, "that such a retardation of the growth of capitalism is tantamount to preparing for an even greater and more extensive growth in the near future." \* This prognosis of Lenin was wholly confirmed by the whole subsequent course of Russian history.

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\* Lenin, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 380, Moscow 1934.

**The Formation of an Industrial Proletariat.** Simultaneously with the development of industry there grew an industrial proletariat, formed out of the landless and impoverished peasant masses and the urban craftsmen.

Lenin, in his book *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, describes the process by which the peasant was torn away from the land and turned into a hired worker. The ruined peasant was compelled to seek employment on the railways and at the new factories and mills. The factory workers' links with the land weakened from year to year. By the 'eighties the factories had become the principal means of livelihood for half of all the workers in Russia. Most of the peasant handicraftsmen were ruined either by falling into the clutches of dealers or else they threw up their crafts and went to work in the factories and mills. "The forty years that have elapsed since the reform," wrote Lenin, "have been marked by this constant process . . . of 'de-peasanting.' " \*

By the middle of the 'eighties an industrial proletariat had grown up in Russia. Between 1861 and 1881 the number of workers doubled, amounting in 1881 to 668,000 men. With the increasing process of concentration in industry the big-scale enterprises accounted for over half the total number of workers employed. There were large enterprises such as the Krenholm Mills near Narva which employed as many as 9,000 workers.

The industrial proletariat was a new social class, called to life by the development of industrial capitalism. The industrial proletariat, unlike the serf workers and the petty handicraftsmen, was massed in the large factories and mills and united by a spirit of solidarity. This facilitated its struggle against the capitalists and tsarism.

**The Conditions of the Workers.** The workers in the 'sixties and 'seventies were ruthlessly exploited. The labour of women and children was extensively employed. Children were sent from the orphan homes to work in the factories, mills, and mines.

The working day was not regulated by law and usually amounted to fourteen and sometimes as much as sixteen and even nineteen hours a day. Adolescents worked at the Krenholm Textile Mills from four o'clock in the morning till eight in the evening, i.e., sixteen hours a day. The number of accidents was very high as a result of fatigue and the absence of protective regulations—the machinery not being provided with safety-guards and usually being cleaned while in motion.

The workers received miserably low wages for long hours of work. Adolescents working at the Krenholm Mills earned four rubles a month for a sixteen-hour day, but they actually received in cash not more

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\* Lenin, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. II, p. 380, Moscow 1934.

than eight kopeks a month. The millowner charged 6 rubles 50 kopeks a month for their maintenance, thus leaving them in debt to him at the end of the month to the amount of 2 rubles 58 kopeks. The worker had to work many years to pay off this debt. The average wage of a Russian worker was 14 rubles 16 kopeks a month for adult men and 10 rubles 35 kopeks for adult women. Many workers received a wage of 7 to 8 rubles a month. In some districts wages were still lower. The wages of an adult worker in the Urals averaged only 4 rubles 80 kopeks a month.

But even this wretched wage was never received by the workers in full or all at once. Sometimes they were paid only two or three times a year. There were no fixed periods for wage payments. Part of the wages (from one-quarter to one-half) was deducted to cover fines which the employers imposed in the most unscrupulous and arbitrary fashion. The employers, moreover, frequently cheated the workers when calculating their wages. The workers were compelled to take bad food products on credit in the factory shops at prices twice or three times above market prices. The workers lived from hand to mouth, on a diet of potatoes, cabbage and rye bread. They never saw butter, meat or sugar.

Housing conditions were exceedingly bad. The workers were forced to live in factory dwellings on the factory grounds. Some ten to twelve persons were crowded together in a tiny room in the workers' barracks. This, too, became a source of profit for the employers who deducted



*Eviction of the poor in winter. From the painting by P. Yakovlev*

exorbitant rents from the workers' wages. Regulations were drawn up for the tenants who were then fined outrageously for any violations. The workers were under constant surveillance and could not leave the factory grounds even after work hours or on holidays without obtaining permission from their overseers. The textile workers who had not yet broken their ties with the village, working in the mills only in winter and returning to the village in the spring to till the fields, were in the worst position of all.

The monstrous exploitation of the workers yielded the manufacturers huge profits. In Russia, as everywhere else, capitalism battened on the bones and blood of the workers.

#### 50. FOREIGN POLICY OF TSARISM IN THE 'SIXTIES AND 'SEVENTIES

**Tsarism's International Position after the Crimean War.** The failure of the Crimean War put an end to tsarism's supremacy in European politics. Though still maintaining its role of Europe's gendarme tsarism gradually became the instrument of West European capital. It no longer held a commanding position among the Western European states.

Russia's foreign policy was aimed at casting off the humiliating clauses of the Treaty of Paris of 1856, under which she was not allowed to maintain a war fleet in the Black Sea, build military naval yards, arsenals and coastal fortifications. Counting on German help, tsarism in 1863 concluded a convention with Prussia which had supported Alexander II during the uprising in Poland. In turn the alliance with Russia helped Prussia win the wars against Austria and France and create a united German empire in 1871.

The tsarist government took advantage of France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 to declare itself no longer bound by the limitations of Russia's right of securing her defences in the Black Sea imposed by the Treaty of Paris (1856). England's protest against the breach of the Treaty of Paris was not supported by the other countries. The London Conference of Powers in 1871 annulled those clauses of the Paris Treaty to which Russia objected (with the exception of the convention on the Aland Islands prohibiting the construction of fortresses on them which remained in force until 1914).

A reactionary alliance of Russia, Germany and Austria was formed in 1873 to combat the international revolutionary movement which had become a serious menace to the capitalist world after the Paris Commune.

The alliance of the three emperors, however, was necessarily of brief duration owing to the serious contradictions which existed among its signatories.

Most acute in this period was the conflict of interests between Russia and Austria in the Balkans which both powers were striving to turn into their own sphere of influence.

**The Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878.** Russia in the 'seventies continued to strengthen her influence in the Balkans where she endeavoured to establish a firm economic and military base. The Black Sea and the Mediterranean could no longer remain the home-waters of a single Asiatic (Turkey) or European (Great Britain) power. Russia, as a Black Sea power, was vitally interested in the freedom of the straits, fearing lest any strong power, such as Great Britain, take possession of the straits and lock Russia up in the Black Sea.

Bent on the realization of her political and strategical ends tsarist Russia supported the movement for national liberation of the Balkan Slavs against Turkish domination. One such movement broke out in 1875 in two Turkish provinces—Bosnia and Herzegovina. The majority of the population in these regions consisted of Serbians. In the following year another Slavonic nation, the Bulgarians, revolted against the Turks. The risings for national liberation among the Slavonic nations were crushed by Turkey with incredible ferocity. The population of entire villages that had taken part in the revolts were exterminated wholesale and massacred by the Turks.

Not wishing to begin a war with Turkey, the tsarist government lent its support to Serbia and Montenegro who declared war on Turkey in the summer of 1876. The Serbian army was commanded by a Russian general, Chernyayev. A public campaign was launched in Russia against Turkey in support of the Slav peoples. For this purpose a Slav Committee was organized, which began to recruit volunteers for the war against Turkey.

Despite the aid of Russia Serbia was defeated by Turkey in October 1876 and compelled to sign peace. Little Montenegro continued the struggle alone.

The Turkish sultan, encouraged by British diplomacy, refused to make any concessions to the rebel Slav nations. It was not in Great Britain's interests that Russia should gain control over the straits. Making preparations for war against Turkey Alexander II concluded an agreement with Austria-Hungary through the instrumentality of Germany providing for the division of Turkish territories. Austria-Hungary promised Russia to maintain neutrality in the war, in exchange for which she demanded the consent of tsarist Russia to the seizure of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Russia declared war on Turkey in the spring of 1877. The war revealed how totally unprepared Russia was both technically and economically. The Russian troops went to war under field regulations which had been issued before the Crimean War. Their armament was

considerably inferior to that of the Turks, who were supplied with new guns produced at the Krupp works in Germany. The Russian soldiers, on the other hand, were ordered to "use bullets sparingly" and to make the bayonet charge their chief object in battle on account of the shortage of cartridges.

The Russian army crossed the Danube in the summer of 1877. The soldiers displayed miracles of heroism and courage, especially during the famous defence of the Shipka Pass across the Balkans, when, under the rigorous conditions of winter, in trenches and snow-built fortifications, the Russian soldiers repulsed an assault of the Turks and thus saved the army from imminent defeat. But the men's heroism was offset, more often than not, by the incapacity of their generals. The Russian command failed to make proper provision for protecting the flanks and lines of communications of the advancing army. A large Turkish army under General Osman Pasha operating in the vicinity of the strong Turkish fortress of Plevna represented a particular menace. Unless Plevna was taken the tsarist army could not make the passage of the Balkans. The Russian troops three times attempted the storm of Plevna, but owing to insufficient preparation the assault failed each time. The Russian command then invested Plevna which it subjected to a long siege. After the fall of Plevna the Russian troops crossed the ice-clad mountain ridges amid blizzards and frost and drew up to Constantinople. England, however, had brought her fleet into the Sea of Marmora and threatened to make war on Russia if she attempted to take Constantinople. Austria, supported by Germany, also took up a hostile attitude. Simultaneously with war on the European front, military operations against Turkey were also in progress in Transcaucasia. Here the Turks were severely defeated by the Russians who took the fortress of Ardahan and Kars.

A preliminary treaty of peace was signed at San Stefano (near Constantinople) in February 1878, under which Russia received the mouth of the Danube, thus establishing direct connection between Russian territory and the Balkan Peninsula. A Slav Bulgarian principality was formed in the Balkans. Turkey was compelled to recognize the independence of Serbia, Montenegro and Rumania. The Transcaucasian cities of Ardahan, Kars, Bayazit and Batumi were ceded to Russia. Tsarism was to receive from Turkey an indemnity of 310,000,000 rubles.

The San Stefano Treaty, which strengthened Russia, ran counter to the interests of Austria and England who demanded the treaty's revision at a European congress.

At the congress held in Berlin in 1878 tsarist Russia was compelled to make concessions, for she could not possibly fight both Austria and England. Following the decisions of the Berlin Congress Bosnia and Herzegovina were occupied by Austro-Hungarian troops; Bulgaria

was dismembered: the principality of Bulgaria was formed to the north of the Balkans in vassal dependence on Turkey and the southern part of Bulgaria (Eastern Rumelia) was given back to Turkey. The northern part of the Danube delta was left to Russia and the rest turned over to Rumania. Russia recovered the southern part of Bessarabia, and Batum and Kars in Transcaucasia.

Thus the results of Russia's victorious war were reduced practically to nought by the Berlin Congress. This created disappointment and discontent in Russia. The reactionary press defended tsarism's diplomatic failure by trying to place the blame on the "treachery" of the German Chancellor Bismarck who had indeed had a hand in modifying the peace terms to the disadvantage of Russia and the peoples of the Balkans.

Germany, after her victories over France and Austria, had less need than before of an alliance with tsarism, whereas an alliance with Austria offered her greater advantages in the Balkans. In 1879 Germany concluded a treaty of alliance with Austria. This was the first landmark in the future world war of 1914-1918.

**The Conquest of Central Asia.** Tsarism tried to make up for a restricted home market fettered by the survivals of serfdom after the reforms of 1861, by new territorial conquests. The landlords and the bourgeoisie were particularly attracted to Central Asia which was a potentially profitable consuming market and a rich source of raw cotton for the Russian textile industry.

Three large feudal states had existed in Central Asia ever since the 18th century: the Kokand khanate, the Bokhara emirate and the Khiva khanate. They were constantly at war with each other. The Uzbek, Tajik, Kirghiz and Turkmen peasants were in complete dependence upon the khans, beys and the mullahs. The rich feudal-landlords had seized the land and the water. Wars, plunder and dire exploitation had greatly impoverished the people. All this facilitated the conquest of Central Asia by the tsarist troops. Armed as they were with flint locks, the troops of these khanates could not put up effective resistance to the tsarist artillery and infantry. Tsarism's advance in Central Asia, which had been temporarily checked by the Crimean War, was renewed in the summer of 1864. General Chernyayev defeated the Kokand khanate and in 1865 took possession of its chief economic centre, Tashkent. Russian merchants, following upon the heels of the tsarist troops, began to trickle into the conquered territory.

Governor-General Kaufman launched a campaign against Bokhara in 1868. The tsarist troops defeated the emir's army and seized Samarkand—the religious Mussulman centre, formerly the capital of Tamerlane. An uprising against the Russian conquerors broke out in Samarkand where only a small Russian garrison had been stationed.

The mullahs proclaimed a holy war (*hazavat*) against the Russians. The rebels stormed the fortress for seven days but were repulsed and the uprising was soon brutally crushed. The insurgents who were arrested were summarily shot on Kaufman's orders.

After his defeat the emir of Bokhara became a vassal of the tsar.

In the spring of 1873 the tsarist army marched against Khiva. The khan of Khiva surrendered without giving battle, and his kingdom was likewise converted into a Russian dependency.

The peoples of Central Asia continued their struggle against tsarism. One of the first uprisings took place in 1875-1876 in Kokand where the mullahs had proclaimed a holy war. It was led by Abdurrahman-Avtobachi but was quickly and ruthlessly suppressed by General Skobelev and its leaders executed. The Kokand khanate was annexed to Russia and renamed the Ferghan region. A few years later, unable to bear the intolerable oppression of the tsarist officials, the poor people of Ferghan rose again in rebellion only to be crushed again by the tsarist forces.

Turkmenia was conquered in 1880-1884. The nomad Turkomans' camps were pitched between the Caspian Sea and the Amu Darya. In 1880 Skobelev seized the oasis of Akhal-Tekke. He took the adobe fort of Geok-Tepe by storm and in the following year occupied Ashkhabad. In 1884 the rich oasis of Merv was occupied. With the taking of the Afghan fortress of Kushka in 1885 tsarism completed its conquest of Central Asia.

Central Asia became a colony of tsarism. Vast lands fell into the possession of the tsarist family, the generals and officials. The institutions of slavery and serfdom were retained in the subjugated Central Asian regions by tsarism. However, the tsarist generals and officials did not come alone. With them came Russian workers, scientists, doctors, agronomists and teachers. These were a tremendous cultural and revolutionizing influence in the life of the peoples of Central Asia.

**Increased Exploitation of the Masses in the Colonies.** After the abolition of serfdom in Russia, the exploitation of the peasants in the colonies increased. Government taxes were much higher there than in Russia. The peasants became increasingly impoverished.

The hard lot of the peasants was aggravated by the fact that they enjoyed no political rights and were subjected to national oppression. There were, for example, no organs of local self-government (*zemstvos*) in Georgia. A country with a thousand-year-old civilization was not given a judicial system with trial by jury on the pretext that such a court was suited only to a cultural and developed country which, from the point of view of the tsarist bureaucrats, was not true of Georgia. All power in the Georgian villages was in the hands of the elders and scribes who were appointed by arrangement with the local



landlords. Arbitrary power, lawlessness, bribery and violence were rife throughout the village administration.

The colonization of Georgia and Transcaucasia proceeded apace in the second half of the 19th century. The best lands were handed over to the Russian colonists to the detriment of the local peasants who were left practically landless. The royal family occupied the richest vineyards in Kakhetia. The Caucasian viceroy, a brother of Alexander, seized the famous health resort of Borzhom while the tsar himself took possession of the health resort of Abbas-Tuman.

The peasants of Georgia stubbornly resisted the tsarist colonizers and Georgian landlords. They refused to pay *obrok* or to perform their *barshchina* services, killed the most unpopular of the landlords, the kulaks and representatives of the tsarist government authorities.

In the second half of the 19th century mass disturbances broke out among the peasants in Georgia. In 1875-1876 an uprising broke out in free Svanetia which had never known serfdom before and refused to submit to the tsarist officials. A punitive expedition was sent to Svanetia and it brutally suppressed the uprising, arresting and exiling its leaders to Siberia.

Tsarism placed the best lands of Transcaucasia, particularly along the seacoast, under the control of the appanage department and shared them out to the Russian military and the big bureaucracy.

The Russian landlords seized the best lands in the Northern Caucasus as well, cultivating them with non-local labour.

Tsarist colonizers also took possession of the lands in Bashkiria. The allotment of a Bashkir herdsman was fixed at 30 dessiatins, the rest being turned over to a state reserve fund. The tsarist officials, headed by the governor-general, made short work of this fund. Moreover, they forced the Bashkirs "to sell" their land to the Russian landlords and capitalists. The Bashkirs "were paid" from eight to ten kopeks for a dessiatin of rich black earth. This plundering of the Bashkirian lands under the guise of a "purchase deal" is strikingly described by Leo Tolstoy in his story *How Much Land Does a Man Require?*

The Russian buyers of pelts would supply the peoples of Siberia and the Far North with liquor and obtain their furs for a mere song. Ruined by this predatory exploitation, the peoples of Siberia and the Far North were dying out under tsarism.

Tsarist Russia was a prison of the peoples. Tsarism was the executioner and tyrant of the non-Russian peoples. The numerous non-Russian peoples were entirely devoid of political rights and were subjected to merciless exploitation, insult and humiliation. The non-Russian peoples were officially called *inorodtsi* (aliens). The slightest manifestation of national independence was ruthlessly crushed.

This colonial policy of tsarism, however, met with no sympathy

or support among the Russian people. Tsarism was not representative of the Russian nation. Its true representatives were those best Russian men and women who considered it their patriotic duty to rally all the peoples around the Russian nation in order to wage a joint struggle against the common enemy—tsarism. The friendship of the peoples was at that time a dream of the most progressive elements in Russia. That dream became reality only after the victory of the October Socialist Revolution of 1917.

## 51. THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT OF THE 'SEVENTIES

The Narodnik Movement of the 'Seventies. In the 'sixties and 'seventies the peasantry, thoroughly dissatisfied with the reform of 1861, continued its struggle for land. It demanded a "black redistribution," i.e., the abolition of landownership by the landlords and the transfer of all the land to the peasants.

Until the appearance of Marxist groups revolutionary work in Russia both among the workers and the peasants was carried on by the *Narodniks* (the Populists). They failed, however, to appreciate the leading role of the working class. They tried to rouse the peasants to a struggle for land and freedom against the landlords and tsarism and gave themselves up utterly, and frequently their lives as well, to this struggle. But all their efforts were fruitless, for they had taken the wrong road.

The Narodniks were opponents of Marxism. The major errors of the Narodniks were the following:

"First, the Narodniks asserted that capitalism was something 'accidental' in Russia, that it would not develop, and that therefore the proletariat would not grow and develop either.

"Secondly, the Narodniks did not regard the working class as the foremost class in the revolution. They dreamed of attaining Socialism without the proletariat. They considered that the principal revolutionary force was the peasantry—led by the intelligentsia—and the peasant commune, which they regarded as the embryo and foundation of Socialism.

"Thirdly, the Narodniks' view of the whole course of human history was erroneous and harmful. They neither knew nor understood the laws of the economic and political development of society. In this respect they were quite backward. According to them, history was made not by classes, and not by the struggle of classes, but by outstanding individuals—'heroes'—who were blindly followed by the masses, the 'mob,' the people, the classes." \*

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\* *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, Eng. ed., pp. 11-12, Moscow 1945.

In pursuance of these erroneous premises the revolutionaries were determined to seek the support of the masses, or, as it was termed, "going to the people." Dressed up as peasants, they went into the villages in the spring of 1874 to carry on revolutionary propaganda. This "going to the people," is what gave them the name of Narodniks (*narod* meaning people). The peasants lent a willing enough ear to the Narodniks when they called upon them to take away the land from the landlords but remained deaf to the appeals to overthrow the tsar. The Narodniks did not win a following among the peasantry, for they did not really know the peasant or understand him. The Narodnik propagandists were hunted down by the police with the aid of the reactionary clergy and the kulaks and the "going to the people" movement ended in complete failure. The Narodniks then resolved to fight against tsarism single-handed, without the people, by means of individual terrorist acts. And this led to even more serious mistakes.

The Narodniks who had escaped arrest organized in 1876 a centralized secret organization called *Zemlya i Volya* (Land and Freedom). Among its founders were G. V. Plekhanov, V. N. Figner, Natanson and S. Perovskaya. The *Zemlya i Volya* adopted a Narodnik program based on the anarchist theory of Bakunin which denied that any benefit might accrue to the people from political liberties and a democratic system.

M. A. Bakunin (1814-1876) came of an old family of the landed gentry. He emigrated in the 'forties. In this period Bakunin advocated the liberation of all Slav peoples and the organization of a Slav federated state with tsarist Russia at the head.

After his arrest for taking part in the revolutionary movement in Germany and Austria in 1848 Bakunin was extradited by the Austrians and imprisoned by the tsarist government in the Schlüsselburg Fortress. He was released in 1857 after he had sent a penitent "Confession" to Nicholas I attributing his revolutionary enthusiasms to "immaturity of mind and heart," and another penitent letter to Alexander II. In 1861 Bakunin, who had been banished to Siberia, managed to escape and go abroad.

There, influenced by the theories of Proudhon, Bakunin became an anarchist. He founded a secret revolutionary society, "The International Alliance of Socialist Democracy," with an anarchist program. Later he joined the First International founded by Marx and Engels. On the insistence of Marx, Bakunin proclaimed the "Alliance" dissolved, but in actual fact he retained his secret organization in order to fight against Marx and the international working-class movement of which Marx was the leader.

Bakunin was an enemy of the working class and a disorganizer of the international labour movement. His disruptive activities contributed to the downfall of the First International.

Bakunin also exercised an influence on the Russian revolutionary movement. He believed that the Russian masses were ripe for revolution and all they needed was the spark of agitation to kindle the flames of a "general mutiny." As an anarchist and a "rebel" Bakunin disavowed the need for the proletariat and the peasantry waging a political struggle and establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat. He demanded the immediate abolition of all government. His program and tactics were fallacious and harmful.

P. L. Lavrov (1823-1900), also the son of a rich landlord, was another theorist of the Narodniks. He was arrested in the 'sixties and exiled. His *Historical Letters* (written under the pseudonym of Mirtov) were published in 1869, in which he gave an idealistic interpretation of history, making the "critically-thinking individual" the centre of the historical process, i.e., he counterpoised the "hero" to the passive masses, to the people, to the "mob." Lavrov preached the false Narodnik doctrine attributing to the intelligentsia the leading role in history. In March 1870 Lavrov fled from his place of exile and went abroad. He had no understanding of Marxism and tried to prove that Russia could arrive at Socialism by obviating capitalism, since the Russian peasant was allegedly prepared for Socialism by the "political tradition of the village community and the artel." Unlike Bakunin, Lavrov advocated a peaceful propagandizing of Socialism. His preachings about the debt that was to be repaid to the people to whose labours civilization owed its existence, were popular among the noblesse revolutionary youth of the 'seventies and served as the theoretical basis for its "going to the people."

A third theorist of Narodism was P. N. Tkachov (1844-1885) who asserted that the tsarist autocracy had no social mainstay, that it was "suspended in mid-air." The task of the revolutionaries, according to Tkachov, was the violent seizure of power by a small group of conspirators who would then introduce revolutionary measures from above and shower benefits on the people. According to Tkachov such a group of conspirators could, by themselves, reorganize the whole social system. His views regarding the role and significance of the village community as the basis for a socialist revolution in Russia were sharply criticized by Engels in his article *Social Relations in Russia*, in which he exposed the reactionary nature of the Narodniks' idealization of the artels and the village community. Engels pointed out that the village community was everywhere the natural bulwark of despotism.

After the movement of "going to the people" had failed the members of the *Zemlya i Volya* decided to organize the settlement of revolutionaries in the countryside where they were to work permanently among the peasants as teachers, doctors, doctors' assistants, volost scribes, etc. This attempt failed as signally as the movement for "going to

the people." In the middle of the 'seventies hundreds of Narodniks were sentenced to penal servitude and exile.

**Narodism in the Ukraine and Georgia.** Narodnik ideas and organizations spread to the Ukraine and to Georgia. The 'seventies witnessed an intensification of the peasants' struggle for land in the Ukraine. The landlords at the time were marking their bounds off from the peasant lands, in the process of which they deprived the peasants of the best lands and gave them waste plots instead. The Ukrainian peasants, like the Russians, demanded a general redistribution of the land and its allotment to them.

The Ukrainian *raznochintsi* set up revolutionary Narodnik circles in the towns. The Bakunin followers formed the so-called "Kiev Commune" which calculated on an immediate revolution in the village. The failure of the "going to the people" and the "settlement" movements induced the Kiev rebels to resort to terrorism.

The Ukrainian rebels even decided to resort to deception and exploit the peasants' faith in the tsar. They circulated in the name of the tsar a "Golden Charter" printed in an illegal Narodnik printshop in the Chigirin uyezd of the Kiev gubernia. This charter urged the peasants to organize secret organizations and promised them, in the name of the tsar, all the lands belonging to the landlords. The police and the gendarmes broke up this organization. The Narodniks acted as demagogues in the case of Chigirin, speculating on the political backwardness of the masses. The peasants soon realized the deception that had been practised on them and turned away from the Narodniks.

Narodnik ideas in the 'seventies were likewise current among the Georgian democratic youth. Georgia did not have a village community, but the Georgian Narodniks, following in the tread of their Russian associates, demanded the organization of artels and the institution of communal land ownership in the belief that the village community represented the only path to Socialism.

In 1876 the Georgian Narodnik organization was suppressed by the gendarmes. Some of the Georgian Narodniks took part in the all-Russian Narodnik movement but others were opposed to a common struggle in cooperation with the Russian people and advocated the organization of an independent Transcaucasian Federation beyond the confines of Russia. A tendency began to take form among the Georgian Narodniks in 1880 repudiating revolutionary methods of struggle and advocating the use of legal methods only.

**Narodnaya Volya (The People's Will).** The failure of the "going to the people" movement gave rise to heated controversy in the Narodnik organization *Zemlya i Volya* in 1878. What was to be done further? Some of the Narodniks advocated that the struggle for land should be abandoned and terrorism be adopted as the sole method

of struggle, their primary object being the assassination of the tsar. Another section tried to cling to the old Narodnik platform. In the autumn of 1879 the adherents of initial Narodism organized the "Black Redistribution" party which, however, soon ceased to exist owing to the utter impossibility of continuing the struggle in the old forms.

The advocates of terrorism organized the *Narodnaya Volya* party in St. Petersburg, headed by Zhelyabov, Sophia Perovskaya and V. N. Figner. It was the aim of this party to assassinate Alexander II, on whose life several attempts were made. The most important of these was the attempt made in February 1880 in the Winter Palace. Here the Narodnik, Stepan Khalturin, a worker, arranged an explosion which did not, however, injure the tsar. After this attempt Alexander appointed General Loris-Melikov with dictatorial power to combat the revolutionary movement, placing all the ministries and the Third Section (Secret Police) under his control. Contemporaries of Loris-Melikov characterized his policy in the following words: "Fox tail and wolf's jaws." Loris-Melikov made some small concessions to the bourgeoisie: relaxed the severity of the censorship for the bourgeois-liberal press, and secured the resignation of the hated Minister of Education, Count D. Tolstoy. These measures made him a liberal in the eyes of the bourgeoisie. Under him, however, the persecutions and executions of the revolutionaries increased. Loris-Melikov closed the Third Section but instituted in its place a Police Department under the Ministry of the Interior which served the same purpose. Loris-Melikov promised to convene a conference of representatives of the zemstvos with the government officials for a preliminary discussion of new legislation. This plan came to be known as "Loris-Melikov's Constitution."

On March 1, 1881 members of *Narodnaya Volya* assassinated Alexander II. Terrorism did not stimulate the mass movement but, on the contrary, weakened it. The tactics of individual terrorism were profoundly erroneous and extremely harmful. It was based on the fallacious Narodnik theory of active "heroes" and a passive "mob," which were supposedly waiting for their salvation at the hands of the individual "heroes." The "mob," according to the Narodniks and members of the *Narodnaya Volya*, was the people, i.e., the peasants and the workers. Themselves they regarded as the "heroes."

The terrorism practised by the Narodniks (members of the *Zemlya i Volya* and the *Narodnaya Volya*) impeded the revolutionary struggle of the masses, scattered the forces of the workers and peasants and intensified the government reaction.

The historical merit of the Narodniks of the 'seventies was their selfless struggle against tsarism and the landlords, their struggle for the transfer of all the land to the peasants. But this struggle had no

socialist aims—in fact the Narodniks maintained a bourgeois-democratic platform. Lenin called the Narodniks of the 'seventies petty-bourgeois Utopian Socialists.

Marxism arose and gained ground in Russia in the fight against fallacious Narodnik theories and their most harmful tactics of terrorism which left no room for the organization of the mass struggle of the proletariat and the peasantry and retarded the creation of an independent party of the proletariat.

## 52. THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT OF THE 'SEVENTIES

**The First International and the Revolutionary Movement in Russia.** The development of capitalism and the growth of the working-class movement in all the countries of Western Europe brought the working class face to face with the task of uniting for a struggle against capital. On September 28, 1864 Karl Marx, the great proletarian leader, together with the politically advanced workers of the world, founded the International Workingmen's Association or the First International. The aim of the Association was to unite the workers of all the world in a struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. "The emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves," wrote Marx in the Rules of the First International.

A group of Russian revolutionaries living abroad formed the Russian section of the First International. In March 1870 they requested Karl Marx to represent Russia on the General Council of the International. In his answer accepting the offer, Marx wrote them that the task of destroying tsarism in Russia was an essential condition to the liberation not only of the Russian people but of the European proletariat as well.

The revolutionary struggle of the Russian workers began at a time when the working class in Western Europe, led by Marx and Engels, was building up its class organizations (party, trade unions). Under the leadership of the First International the European workers were effectually carrying on strikes and fighting against the power of capital. In 1871 the French workers overthrew the rule of the bourgeoisie and set up the Paris Commune. This was the first government of the working class, i.e., a dictatorship of the proletariat. The Russian workers declared their solidarity with the First International from the very outset of their independent revolutionary struggle. In 1878, on the anniversary of the Paris Commune, the workers of Odessa sent a message to the workers of Paris, declaring their solidarity with the Paris Communards. The programs, statutes and activities of the Western

European working-class organizations served as models for the Russian workers.

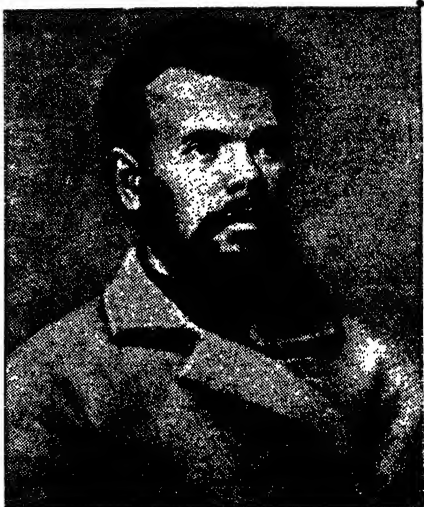
**The Strikes of the 'Seventies.** The Russian Narodnik revolutionaries, holding the mistaken view that the peasantry and the intellectual *raznochintsy* formed the principal revolutionary force, assigned the proletariat a secondary role in the revolutionary movement. The Narodniks failed to grasp the significance of the class struggle of the proletariat. But the working class in Russia had been growing steadily and already embarked on its revolutionary struggle. Strikes broke out spontaneously at the industrial enterprises. The first big strike occurred at the Neva textile mills in St. Petersburg in May, 1870. The striking weavers demanded an increase in wages and stood together as one man. Only by means of arrests and legal prosecutions were the police able to break the workers' resistance. Participation in strikes being regarded as a state crime, the strikers were tried and condemned by the tsarist court. A still more important strike broke out at the Krenholm Mills in 1872. The strikers demanded a reduction of fines and a shorter working day for children who were inhumanly exploited at these mills. The strike was suppressed with the aid of troops.

Strikes broke out simultaneously in the Ukraine. One thousand five hundred workers took part in the strike in the Hughes factory in 1875. The strike of the Odessa railway workers in 1877 lasted three and a half weeks.

The Georgian proletariat began its struggle in the 'seventies too.

Thus, the 'sixties and 'seventies saw the beginning of a spontaneous movement of the workers in different parts of Russia.

**The First Worker-Revolutionaries.** A number of revolutionaries from among the workers came to the fore. One of them was Vasili Gerasimov, an active participant in the strike of 1872 at the Krenholm Mills. He had been brought up in an orphan home and began work at the mills at the age of twelve. For carrying on revolutionary propaganda among the soldiers and workers in St. Petersburg Vasili Gerasimov was sentenced to nine years' penal servitude. He died in



V. G. Gerasimov





Pyotr Alexeyev

Yakutsk in 1892. The notes he left behind give a picture of the hard life of the Russian workers in the 'sixties and 'seventies and their awakening to the struggle.

Another outstanding worker-revolutionary of the 'seventies was Pyotr Alexeyev, a mill worker, a Smolensk peasant by birth and a member of Narodnik circles. Pyotr Alexeyev taught himself to read and write, and he sought avidly in books for an answer to the pressing problems of the workers and peasants. (This answer he found in the illegal socialist literature, and Pyotr Alexeyev became a Socialist. He carried on revolutionary agitation among the workers and went

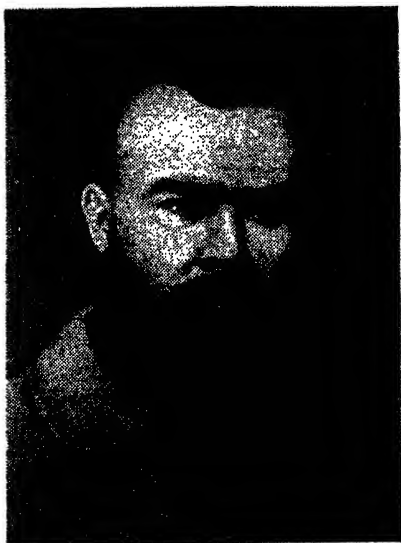
from factory to factory to organize the workers in revolutionary circles.

Pyotr Alexeyev was a very popular figure, and the Moscow weavers, who affectionately called him "Petrukha," remembered him for a long time. Arrested for carrying on revolutionary activities he made a speech at his trial on March 10, 1877 which he concluded with the following words: "The muscular arm of the working millions will be lifted, and the yoke of despotism, guarded by the soldiers' bayonets, will be smashed to atoms!" Lenin called this speech the "great prophecy of the Russian worker-revolutionary."

Pyotr Alexeyev was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude and banishment to Yakutia, where he was killed by bandits in 1891.

**The First Workers' Organizations.** The first revolutionary workers' organization in Russia was the "South Russian Workers' Union" founded in Odessa in 1875 by Eugene Zaslavsky. The aim of the union was "to propagandize the idea of the liberation of the workers from the yoke of capital and the privileged classes." The "South Russian Workers' Union" based its revolutionary activities on the rules of the First International. According to the rules of the union only workers could be its members. This first workers' union united 150-200 metal workers. The union began to organize branches in other towns as well. It existed for about a year and was broken up by the gendarmes. Its organizer, Zaslavsky, was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude and died shortly afterwards in prison.

An outstanding leader of the working-class movement in the south of Russia was Victor Obnorsky, a fitter. He escaped arrest and went abroad, where he became acquainted with the working-class movement in Western Europe. After his return to Russia Obnorsky, together with the outstanding revolutionary of that time, Stepan Khalturin, founded in 1878 the "Northern Union of Russian Workers" in St. Petersburg. This union's program stated that its aims were similar to those of the Social-Democratic parties of the West. Unlike the Narodnik anarchist theory the program of the union contained a demand for political liberties. The union undertook the leadership of strikes.



Victor Obnorsky

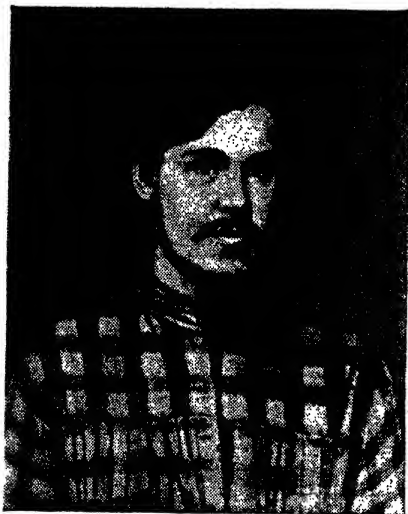
The "Northern Union of Russian Workers" had two hundred members and an equal number of sympathizers. The union organized a secret printshop and was preparing its first issue of a workers' revolutionary magazine, the *Rabochaya Zarya* (*Workers' Dawn*) when the printshop was seized by the gendarmes and the issue did not appear. In 1880 the union was broken up by the gendarmes. Victor Obnorsky was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude. Stepan Khalturin, drawn into terroristic activities by the Narodniks, took part in the attempt on the life of Alexander II and later (in 1882) died on the gallows.

The significance of the first Russian workers' organizations was very great. The demand for political freedom was for them an essential condition for the workers' effective struggle for Socialism.

In answering the criticism of this demand voiced by the Narodniks the organizers of the union wrote: "Political freedom can safeguard us and our organization against the arbitrariness of the authorities, it will enable us to develop a right outlook and carry on the work of propaganda more effectively."

The organizers of the Northern Union were the first to voice the need for a common struggle of the workers and peasants.

The workers' organizations considerably outstripped the Narodniks but they were not yet Marxist organizations. They had not



Stepan Khalturin

yet freed themselves of a number of Narodnik mistakes. Marxism had not yet become their militant banner.

The existence of the first workers' organizations was highly instrumental in hastening the fall of Narodism in Russia.

The strikes which broke out spontaneously beginning with the 'sixties, the great receptivity of the factory and mill workers to Socialist agitation and propaganda and the rise of the first workers' revolutionary organizations were clear evidences that a new progressive revolutionary class—the proletariat—had arisen in Russia. In creating big industry capitalism

at the same time created a working class which, employed as it was in big enterprises, underwent a training, discipline and preparation for its role as the creator and organizer of a new, Socialist society.

### 53. EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND ART IN THE 'SIXTIES AND 'SEVENTIES

**The Development of Education and Science in the 'Sixties and 'Seventies.** The system of education that took form in tsarist Russia after the abolition of serfdom was stimulated by the development of capitalism. Despite government obstruction the zemstvos established popular zemstvo schools in the villages. One of the outstanding organizers of the zemstvo schools in the Simbirsk gubernia was Ilya Nikolayevich Ulyanov (1831-1886), the father of V. I. Lenin. Elementary schools and gymnasia were founded in the cities. There was no sequence or correlation between the elementary and secondary schools. The right of admission to these schools was largely governed by social standing and wealth.

The first gymnasium for girls was opened in the 'sixties. In the 'seventies a Higher School for Women and a Women's Medical School were opened in St. Petersburg. That was the beginning of higher education for women in Russia. The laws of 1863 granted the uni-



D. I. Mendeleev. *From the portrait by N. A. Yaroshenko*

versities autonomous statutes (the right of the University Board to choose professors, rector, and faculty deans).

The abolition of serfdom and the growth of capitalism also stimulated science in Russia. Advanced Russian science in the sixties and seventies of the 19th century made an important contribution to the development of world science.

Notable successes were achieved in the natural sciences. The great Russian chemist, Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev (1834-1907), discovered the periodic law and created the "periodic system of elements." Marx and Engels placed great value on Mendeleev's discovery which they regarded as the triumph of dialectical materialism. The "periodic system of elements" brought Mendeleev world fame. He was the honorary member of many academies throughout the world but not a member of the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences. Under Alexander III Mendeleev was even dismissed from the University of St. Petersburg for supporting the demands of the students. Mendeleev invariably combined theoretical scientific work with practical work in industry.

Another great scientist, the famous Russian physiologist and founder of the Russian school of physiology, Ivan Mikhailovich Se-



I. M. Sechenov.  
From the portrait by I. E. Repin

chenov (1829-1905), also received recognition abroad before it was accorded him at home. Sechenov too was not a member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences. In his works in physiology Sechenov held the materialistic point of view. He was the first to propound the theory that human psychic activity was governed by physiological laws. His famous work *Reflexes of the Brain* (1863) became an object of persecution by the tsarist authorities and the Orthodox church who realized the revolutionizing significance of Sechenov's ideas.

The famous Russian botanist K. A. Timiryazev (1843-1920), was a consistent materialist and revolutionary in

science and in life. His discovery of the role of chlorophyll in the process of the plant imbibition of carbon dioxide from the air and other works on plant physiology brought him recognition abroad. An eminent follower and advocate of the theory of Darwin, K. A. Timiryazev fought ruthlessly against idealism in science. He was a revolutionary-democrat, a fact which led to the tsarist government depriving him of his Chair at the Petrovsky Agricultural Academy, which now bears his name. Timiryazev devoted much time to the practical problems of agriculture. Despite the fame that Timiryazev enjoyed abroad, he too was not a member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences. He lived to see the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution and supported the proletarian dictatorship. Timiryazev was a member of the Communist Academy.

The founder of modern evolutionary palaeontology, the geologist V. O. Kovalevsky, was also a materialist and a Darwinist. He was the author of classic research into the origin of the modern horse from its fossile forebears.

The famous Russian explorer, N. N. Miklucho-Maclay spent more than ten years on New Guinea and other islands of Polynesia (from 1871 to 1883). An adherent of Darwinism, Miklucho-Maclay's anthropological researches on the Papuans or the Melanesians, disproved the existence of higher and lower races. Miklucho-Maclay did his

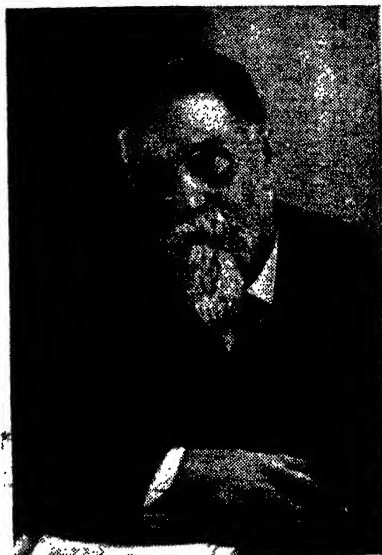
utmost to protect the Papuans from European colonizers.

The first woman professor in Europe, the mathematician Sophie Kovalevskaya (1850-1891) played an important role in science. To escape the tyranny of a despotic father, a general, who would not allow her to study science, she contracted a fictitious marriage with V. O. Kovalevsky. She could not become a professor in Russia and she received the Chair of Higher Mathematics at the University of Stockholm.

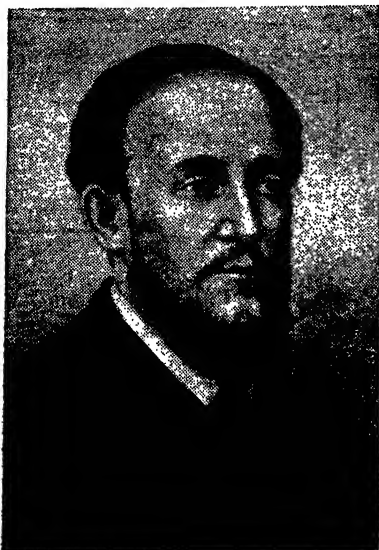
The Russian historian, S. M. Solovyov, produced his best works in the 'sixties. His *History of Russia Since Ancient Times* was based on a vast amount of research material and had a great influence on the further development of historical science in Russia.

**Criticism and Journalism.** Russian progressive journalism also served as a tribune for advanced science. One of its ardent votaries was the well-known Russian critic, enlightener and democrat, Dmitri Ivanovich Pisarev (1840-1868). Lenin highly esteemed Pisarev whom he rated second only after Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov. For a daring proclamation against tsarism, calling for the overthrow of the autocracy, Pisarev was confined to the Fortress of Peter and Paul in 1862-1866. It was in these years that his works were written. He was an irreconcilable foe of autocracy and serfdom. In articles written from prison Pisarev tried to popularize positive sciences, particularly the natural sciences. He was a materialist and one of the first propagandists of Darwinism in Russia. His critical essays were brilliant standards of the critical and journalistic literature of those days. Pisarev demanded of literary authors devoted service to the people and society. Some of his essays reveal a certain degree of misjudgment. Thus, for example, he failed to appreciate the tremendous significance of Pushkin's poetry.

The magazine *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* (*Homeland Notes*), edited by Nekrasov and Saltykov-Shchedrin, became the leading democratic organ in the 'seventies, uniting wide circles of the democratic and Narodnik intelligentsia. One of the most popular of the Narodnik



K. A. Timiryazev.  
From a photograph



D. I. Pisarev

publicists, subsequently the editor of *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, was N. K. Mikhailovsky. Mikhailovsky was one of the leading exponents of the so-called "subjective method in sociology," according to which the ideas and desires of "heroes" ("critically-thinking individuals") determine the development of society. V. I. Lenin, in his book *What the "Friends of the People" Are . . .* shattered Mikhailovsky's anti-scientific and reactionary philosophical and sociological ideas.

**Russian Literature of the 'Sixties and 'Seventies.** The general upsurge of the social movement in Russia after the Crimean War and the struggle for the abolition of serfdom in Russia stimulated the rise of Russian letters.

\* The creative genius of the Russian people was particularly manifested in the field of literature. Russian literature of the 19th century held the palm of ascendancy in world letters. Russian is one of the richest and most felicitous languages in the world. Engels once wrote: "How beautiful is the Russian language: it has all the advantages of the German without its terrible crudity." The great Russian writer Turgenev said of the Russian language: "In the days of doubt and painful reflection on the destinies of my country, thou alone art my support and mainstay oh great, mighty, trustworthy and free Russian tongue! . . . One cannot but believe that such a language has been given to a great people."

Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev (1818-1883), one of the greatest Russian writers, first won repute for his stories dealing with the life of landlords and serf peasants (*Papers of a Sportsman*). He belonged to Belinsky's circle and contributed to the magazine *Sovremennik* (*Contemporary*) in the 'forties and 'fifties. His novels *A Nest of the Gentry*, *Rudin*, *On the Eve*, and *Fathers and Sons*, described the social life of Russia from the forties to the sixties of the 19th century, on the eve of the abolition of serfdom. In *Bazarov* Turgenev has given us a character-study of a democratic commoner of the 'sixties. In *Smoke* Turgenev caricatured the life of Russian emigrants, while *Virgin Soil* is a portrayal of the Narodniks. Turgenev showed

a master hand in his pictures of Russian nature and in his use of the Russian language. Most of his works show a profound love for his people and admiration for its great spiritual forces, intellect and talent.

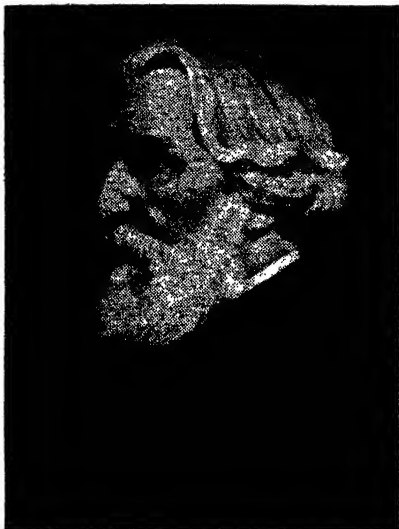
Turgenev was a humanitarian in the best sense of the word; he championed the emancipation of the peasantry from the yoke of serfdom.

I. A. Goncharov (1812-1891) in his novels *A Common Story* and *Oblomov* gives us a picture of bureaucratic and serf Russia of the second quarter of the 19th century. *Oblomovshchina* (Oblomov traits), as portrayed by Goncharov, is a striking characterization of the parasitic existence of the landed serf-owners

who led an idle life at the expense of serf labour. *Oblomov* was received as an indictment of Russian society. Dobrolyubov in his article *What is "Oblomovshchina"?* showed how great was the social significance of this work. Lenin attached the name *Oblomovshchina* to every manifestation of parasitism, inertia and indolence. These features of the exploiting classes are alien to the workers and peasants.

F. M. Dostoyevsky (1821-1881) won fame in the 'forties by his novel *Poor People*. The wretched life of the downtrodden, petty officials of St. Petersburg is portrayed here with great sympathy and power. For participation in the revolutionary circle of Petrashevsky, Dostoyevsky was sentenced to death. Together with the other condemned revolutionaries he lived through all the horrors of the preparations for their execution on the scaffold. He was pardoned at the last moment and his sentence was commuted to penal servitude for four years.

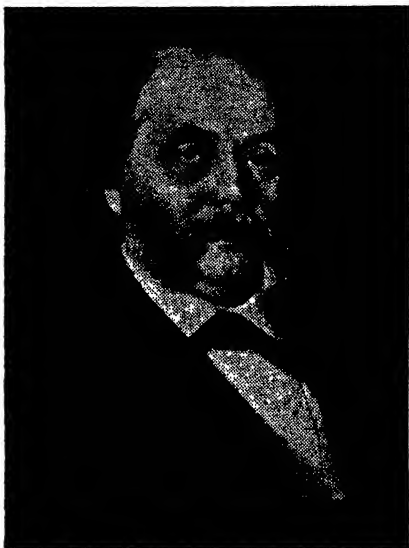
The horrors of convict life in Russia are graphically described by Dostoyevsky in his book *Recollections of a Dead House*. His later novels, *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, brought Dostoyevsky world fame. Dostoyevsky's novels are masterly portrayals of the degradation of the individual in capitalist society. For a number of years Dostoyevsky was under the influence of the revolutionary views of Belinsky. But in his later days he adopted



I. S. Turgenev.

From the portrait by V. G. Perov





I. A. Goncharov.

From the portrait by I. N. Kramskoy

reactionary, religious-mystical views. Some of his books, particularly his latest (*Devils* and others) revealed how profoundly reactionary Dostoyevsky had become.

The *Raznochintsi* writers, the followers of Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov, began their literary activity at the end of the 'fifties. The new revolutionary-democratic trend, in contrast to the writers of the nobility, portrayed with great sympathy for the toilers the seamy side of Russian life which the noblemen-writers had preferred to pass over in silence. One of the *Raznochintsi* writers, Pomyalovsky, in his *Sketches of the Theological College* exposed the conditions prevailing in the ecclesiastical educational institutions. Reshetnikov

described the destitution in the village and the exploitation of the peasants who were leaving for the cities in search of a livelihood.

At this period a split occurred in the hitherto united literature of the progressive trend. Some writers of the nobility resigned from the editorial staff of the *Sovremennik* which, under Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov had taken a revolutionary-democratic trend. The poet Nekrasov and the great Russian writer and satirist, M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin (1826-1889), were the only two men of letters who sided with the revolutionary democracy. The grasping characteristics of the landlords, officials and the exploiting tendencies of the rising Russian bourgeoisie were described by Saltykov-Shchedrin with caustic power and vividness.

His *The History of a Town* is a satirical study of the portrait-gallery of Russian tsars and tsaritsas and their ministers, and of the state system of Russia itself in which he showed how much there still was in common between Russia of his day and Russia of the old serf days. In *Messieurs Golovlyov* and *Poshekhon's Old Times* Saltykov-Shchedrin drew a vivid picture of the corrupt days of serfdom. The Judas of his *Messieurs Golovlyov* is the great satirist's embodiment of the double-dealing scoundrel, the classical typification of whom in politics, Lenin considered the traitor Trotsky.

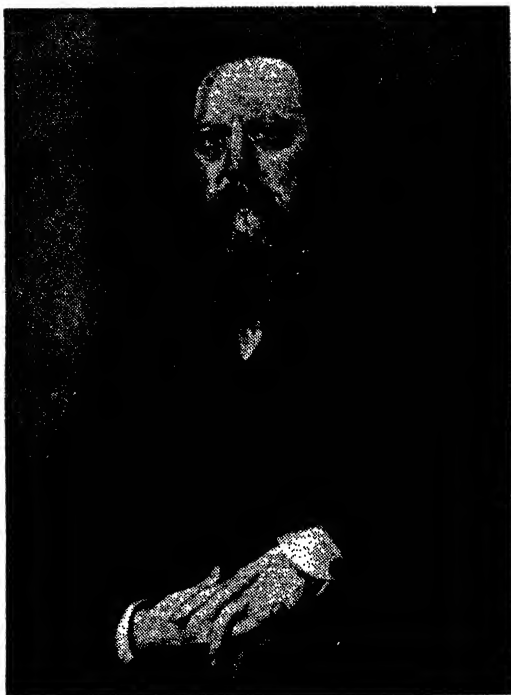
Lenin and Stalin refer to the characters created by Saltykov-Shchedrin when exposing the bureaucratic dullards, the white-livered liberals and political rogues and adventurers. The satirical works of Saltykov-Shchedrin played a very important role in the development of the revolutionary movement in Russia.

A sombre picture of despot-merchants, corrupt officials, and parasitic serf-owners is given in the plays of A. N. Ostrovsky (1823-1886) — *Forest*, *The Thunderstorm*, *A Lucrative Post*, *Poverty Is No Crime*. Ostrovsky was a continuator of the literary traditions of Gogol.

G. I. Uspensky (1843-1902) depicted the life of the oppressed toiling peasant masses with great veracity and sympathy, without concealing the dark sides of the life of the people as the Narodnik novelists were wont to do.

The great Russian writer, L. N. Tolstoy (1828-1910) made his first appearance in literature in the 'fifties. In his remarkable works *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, *Resurrection*, and many others Tolstoy created, as Lenin said, "an incomparable picture of Russian life." It was a pitiless denunciation of the fashionable world of the nobility, of capitalist and serf exploitation, the oppression of tsarism, and the farce of justice. For his criticism of religious superstitions Tolstoy was excommunicated by the Orthodox church.

In *War and Peace*, this great creation of Russian literature, Tolstoy depicts the heroic struggle of the Russian people for their independence in 1812. "The cudgel of a people's war was raised with



M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin.  
From the portrait by I. N. Kramskoy



L. N. Tolstoy.

*From the portrait by I. E. Repin*

ciations of the hypocrisy and falsity of the moral principles of landlord-bourgeois society.

Lenin wrote that Tolstoy's works reflect the contradictions that prevailed in Russian life during the last three decades of the 19th century. "Tolstoy is great when he expresses the ideas and sentiments which were engendered in millions of Russian peasants at the time the bourgeois revolution began in Russia." \*

In the latter half of his life Tolstoy combined a direct and strong protest against social lies and hypocrisies with the doctrine of "non-resistance to evil." This reactionary theory came to be known as "Tolstoyan."

**Art in the 'Sixties and 'Seventies.** Democratic ideas were also reflected in the fine arts. A group of student graduates left the Academy of Arts in the 'sixties as a demonstration of protest against the bureaucratic, reactionary methods of tuition, and subsequently

all its menacing and majestic force . . . and it hammered away at the French until all the invaders had perished." The novel is permeated with a profound faith in the creative powers and the indomitable courage of the great Russian people. Tolstoy gave a remarkable description of the Crimean War (1853-1856) in which he had participated.

Leo Tolstoy depicts the human character and develops the ideas of truth and justice with incomparable artistry. His works such as *Kreutzer Sonata*, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, *The Living Corpse*, *Resurrection*, and others were sweeping denun-

\* Lenin, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. XI, p. 683, Moscow 1938.

founded a society of artists who exhibited their works on tour known as the *Peredvizhniki*. The organizer of the *Peredvizhniki* was the artist I. N. Kramskoy (1837-1887). His program was based on the idea of creating a Russian art. "Art should have ideas and meaning and be based on artistic realism." Kramskoy followed these principles in his portraits of L. N. Tolstoy, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Nekrasov and others. The new trend produced a florescence of remarkable painters. They were united by a common ideological and political tendency: their art was an advocacy of the then progressive ideas of revolutionary democracy. An important figure in this group was V. G. Perov (1833-1882) who painted many pictures on civil themes (*The Burial of a Peasant*, *Troika* and others). An outstanding representative of this movement was Ilya Efimovich Repin (1844-1930), whose pictures were a profoundly realistic portrayal of the miserable conditions of the toiling masses. Repin's picture *The Village Procession* presented religion as an opiate. Repin was also an outstanding portrait painter.

Remarkable progress was achieved in the 'sixties and 'seventies by Russian music. Musical composition was chiefly represented by the so-called "Big Five," under the guidance of M. A. Balakirev (1836-1910), a pupil of Glinka's, and the musical and art critic, V. V. Stasov (1824-1906). These composers continued the work of Glinka and Dargomyzhsky in creating a Russian musical art based on folk melodies. The creative principles of the "Big Five" are expressed with amazing power in the works of M. P. Musorgsky (1839-1881). He wrote two admirable musical dramas — *Boris Godunov*, and *Khovanshchina* in which the leading characters are the Russian people. The songs and romanzas of Musorgsky are unique examples of musical characterization and profound dramatism. Another well-known Russian composer, A. P. Borodin (1833-1887), reproduced in his works the characteristic features of Russian music and the musical culture of the East. Borodin wrote the heroic-patriotic monumental opera *Prince Igor* based on the ancient Russian epic *The Lay of Prince Igor's Regiment*, in which he drew freely and with consummate skill on the folk songs and dances of the peoples of Russia and the East. Borodin's symphonies were an important stage in the development of national Russian symphonic school of the 19th century.

Another famous Russian composer, N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908), a pupil of Balakirev, wrote the operas *May Night*, *The Snow Maiden*, *Sadko*, *The Golden Cockerel*, and others, including the symphonic poem *Sheherezade*. He was a splendid teacher who trained several generations of Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian and Armenian musicians and composers. The work of the "Big Five" laid the foundation for the influence of Russian music on world art.

The 'sixties witnessed great activity in the field of musical education, the predominant striving being to popularize music and to

make music as a profession accessible to all. The foundation by the Rubinstein brothers of the Petersburg and Moscow Conservatories, the first higher musical schools in Russia, had a great effect on the development of musical culture.

**The Theatre.** The Moscow Maly Theatre was the leading Russian theatre in the 'seventies, preserving as it did the best traditions of theatrical realism inherited from Shchepkin. To this period we owe such fine actresses as M. N. Yermolova and G. N. Fedotova. The characters of Catherine in Ostrovsky's *The Thunderstorm*, and of Jeanne d'Arc in Schiller's *The Maid of Orleans* as interpreted by Yermolova sounded from the footboards like a call to struggle. The Maly Theatre staged all of Ostrovsky's plays. In them one of the greatest actors of those days, P. M. Sadovsky, exhibited his admirable talent.

#### 54. THE CULTURE OF THE PEOPLES OF TSARIST RUSSIA IN THE 'SIXTIES AND 'SEVENTIES

Tsarism's persecution of the peoples of Russia inhabiting the national regions always called forth a protest on the part of the Russian revolutionaries, beginning with Radishchev. The Ukrainian, Georgian, Armenian and Tatar writers, artists and musicians who came to the Russian universities to study, became followers of the Russian enlighteners—Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov and fought side by side with them against tsarism.

The growth of capitalism in the national regions of Russia led to the formation of a nation in Georgia, the Ukraine and other borderlands of the empire. This process was accompanied by the development of a national culture the representatives and promoters of which were the bourgeois-democratic intelligentsia of the oppressed peoples.

In 1863 the tsarist government issued a circular prohibiting the publication of pedagogical literature and textbooks in Ukrainian. The circular read: "There never was, is or will be a Malorussian language." The circular claimed that the Ukrainian language was Russian garbled by Polish influence. Ukrainian educators of the 'sixties were arrested and exiled by the tsarist government.

The movement for national liberation in literature, however, continued to grow in the Ukraine despite all prohibitions. A great deal was done in collecting records of the national art (folklore) and describing the habits and customs of the people (ethnography). The centre of this scientific work was the Southwest Department of the Geographical Society in Kiev.

An important figure in the scientific-cultural awakening of the Ukraine was M. P. Dragomanov, docent and subsequently professor of the Kiev University. He was one of the leaders of the organization

"Gromada" and after his emigration in 1876 founded the magazine *Gromada* in Geneva. Dragomanov did much for Ukrainian literary criticism. At first he was an adherent of the democratic popular trend. Being an exponent of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism, Dragomanov gave leading place to the doctrine of a bourgeois national Ukrainian culture and the federative organization of Russia. In the 'eighties, when political reaction was rife, Dragomanov turned sharply right and adopted the views of zemstvo liberalism.

In 1879 the writer, Panas Mirny, obviously under the influence of Dragomanov, wrote the first Ukrainian social novel *Do the Oxen Bellow if the Stalls Are Full?* illustrating the life of the Ukrainian peasantry at the time of the abolition of serfdom. The author tried to show in the fate of the peasant Chipko that the best means of fighting landlordism was—as in the days of the Haidamaks and Karmelyuk—brigandage. These ideas were typical of Bakuninism.

The government, alarmed by the growth of the Ukrainian movement for national liberation, took stronger measures to suppress the Ukrainian language. A secret ukase was issued in 1876 reconfirming the ban on the publication of works in Ukrainian and performances in this language on the stage.

With the first half of the 19th century the bourgeois-national movement began to gain ground in Galicia. Widespread agitation was set on foot demanding native schools conducted in the Ukrainian language. Ukrainian chairs were founded in the Lwow University and the "Shevchenko Scientific Association" was opened in Lwow. This association published the works of Ukrainian scientists, since it was impossible, until 1905, to have them printed in Russia. It studied the history of the Ukrainian people, and its ethnography and literature. This association, however, displayed bourgeois-nationalist tendencies.

The founder of a new Georgian literature was Ilya Chavchavadze (1837-1907). His world-outlook was influenced by Belinsky, Dobrolyubov and Chernyshevsky. The books and magazines published by Chavchavadze propagandized the ideas of enlightenment. He was a harsh critic of serfdom and the bard of peasant toil (*Robber Kiko*, *The Story of the Beggar*). At the same time Chavchavadze, in these works, gives a picture of the degeneration of the nobility and the oppression of the peasants. Chavchavadze's best-known story is: *Is He Human?* He tried to acquaint Georgia with the literature of Europe and Russia by publishing translations of Dobrolyubov, Belinsky and other West European writers.

*Messenger of Georgia*, a magazine issued by Chavchavadze, was the centre of the enlightenment movement among the Georgians. Chavchavadze fought all his life for the development of a Georgian culture and came out boldly against tsarism. In 1907 the tsarist authorities engineered the assassination of Chavchavadze by hired out-



Ilya Chavchavadze.

*From the portrait by Dzhaparidze*

throats. The importance of Chavchavadze in the development of Georgian literature is very great. He is a classic and founder of the modern Georgian literary language and literature.

Among Chavchavadze's closest associates were the poet Akaki Tsereteli, many of whose songs became very popular among the toilers of Georgia, Anton Purtseladze, Niko Nikoladze, K. Lordkipanidze and others.

At the end of the 'sixties a new literary group arose calling itself "Meore-Dassy" (the second group) in opposition to the group of Chavchavadze (the so-called first group, or the "Pirveli-Dassy") which considered the educated nobility as the leading cultured section of the Georgian people. The new group saw in the development of trade and

industry a means for the national regeneration of Georgia. In the 'nineties this group gave its services to big bourgeois interests and supported Russian tsarism.

*Northern Lights*, a magazine in Armenian, was published in Moscow in the 'fifties and 'sixties. Its aim was to cultivate Armenian literature and acquaint the Armenians with Russian and West European literature. The Armenian newspaper *The Worker* was founded in Tiflis in 1872 with the same aim. The greatest Armenian writer of those days, G. Sundukyan (1825-1912), called the "Armenian Ostrovsky," was the author of a number of plays on the life of the Armenian merchant. One of the best of his works was *Pepo*. The first written record of the epic poem, *David Sasunsky*, was made in the 'seventies.

The Kazakh poet, Abai Kunanbayev, the first Kazakh scientist, Chokan Valikanov, and the Kazakh poet-teacher Ibrai Altynsarin were the followers of the Russian enlighteners in Kazakhstan.

The Kazakh poet, Abai Kunanbayev (1845-1897), was the founder of the Kazakh literary language. In his works Abai condemned the negative aspects of the patriarchal-feudal life of the people, exposed the greed and treachery of the county administrators and officials. He introduced in his country the cultures of Western Europe, the East and Russia, translated into the Kazakh tongue the works of

Pushkin, Lermontov and Krylov, and thus enriched the intellectual world and culture of his people with new ideas. Kunanbayev believed that only intimate intercourse with the progressive people of Russia and Russian culture could lead his people out of the obscurity in which they abided. In his poems he strove to make the Kazakh people distinguish the difference between the Russian people and the tsarist colonizers. He educated the Kazakh people to the idea of fraternity and friendship among all peoples.

The Kazakh scientist, Chokan Valikanov (1837-1865), saw the social inequality among the Kazakhs, and realized the antagonism of interests between the toiling masses on the one hand, and the sultans and beys on the other. Chokan Valikanov was the champion of the interests of the people and a true democrat. His work on the history of the Kazakh and Kirghiz peoples, and his studies of the geography of Kazakhstan, Kirghizia and Kashgar were of great scientific importance. It was Valikanov's cherished dream to bring the Russian and Kazakh peoples closer together.

The Kazakh poet Ibrai Altynsarin (1841-1889) was an advocate of extensive popular education. His works are a call to education and culture. He devoted his whole life to the organization of popular education. The composition of the first Kazakh alphabet based on Russian characters is the work of Ibrai Altynsarin.

## Chapter XII

### THE BEGINNING OF THE STRUGGLE OF THE WORKING CLASS AGAINST TSARISM (1883-1900)

#### 55. POLITICAL REACTION

**The Reaction of the Nobility.** Alexander III (1881-1894) ascended the throne upon the assassination of his father, Alexander II, by members of the *Narodnaya Volya*. Under him the people were even worse off than before. Alexander III had not prepared himself to rule the state, and had become heir-apparent on the death of his elder brother. He had looked upon himself merely as "a good regimental commander." After his father's assassination a conference was held to discuss the reforms proposed by Loris-Melikov. These reforms were resolutely opposed by Pobedonostsev, Chief Procurator of the Synod. Alexander rejected Loris-Melikov's projects and dismissed him. The Manifesto issued on April 29, 1881, announced that the tsar would act "in his faith in the force and justice of the principle of autocracy."



Alexander lived in constant fear of assassination. He moved from St. Petersburg to Gatchina where special precautions were taken to ensure his safety. His contemporaries ironically called him the "prisoner of Gatchina." A law was passed in 1881 reinforcing the police with the object of combating the revolutionary movement. Alexander charged the volost elders gathered at his coronation in 1883: "Follow the advice and guidance of your Marshals of the Nobility and do not believe the ridiculous rumours about a redivision of the land. These rumours are spread by your enemies. All property, including your own, must be inviolable." This address was a forecast of Alexander's policy which aimed at upholding the interests of the nobility and restoring the absolute power of the landlords over the peasants. Tsarism was the direst enemy of the toiling masses.

At the end of the 'seventies Russia experienced an industrial crisis which strongly affected the condition of the workers and greatly increased the number of the unemployed.

Simultaneously an agrarian crisis broke out. The vast quantities of cheap American corn which flooded all the European markets brought down the price of grain and reduced the demand for Russian grain. The price on wheat in Odessa in the 'eighties fell to one-third of its original price. The agrarian crisis retarded the growth of capitalism in agriculture. Many landlords went back to the share-cropping system. The increase in the peasant population led to a curtailment of allotments, and the peasant was obliged to lease land from the landlord at high prices. Peasant farming suffered from frequent crop failures. The terrible famine of 1891-1892 affected 35,000,000 people. Hundreds of thousands of people died of starvation, typhus and cholera. The famine still further increased the poverty of the poor and the wealth of the kulaks, and accelerated the process of social differentiation among the peasantry.

The landlords increased the exploitation of the peasants and strove to recover their former power over them. These aspirations of the nobility had the full support of Alexander's government. In 1889 zemstvo chiefs consisting of members of the nobility were appointed and given full power over the peasantry. The rural justices of the peace were abolished. The authorities had the workers and peasants flogged without trial or a hearing. These measures were fully encouraged by Alexander who wrote in his resolution regarding the disturbances in Rostov, "If it were possible to give the ringleaders a sound whipping, without legal procedure, it would be more useful and simpler."

A Peasant Land Bank and a Nobles' Bank were established to help the nobles and the kulaks. The Peasant Land Bank advanced loans to the kulaks for the purchase of land from the nobles at very high prices. The Nobles' Bank granted loans to the nobles against mortgages and advanced money to the landlords on very liberal terms. A law

was issued in 1886 on employment of agricultural labour which made it a criminal offence for a labourer to quit without the permission of his employer. By the passage of this law tsarism helped the landlords to hold the hired labourers in bondage. Despite the government support, landlord tenure steadily shrunk among the nobility. New regulations were issued in 1890 governing the zemstvos, by which the landlords received still greater representation on them. The peasants were deprived of the right to elect the zemstvo members and allowed only to choose the delegates in the volosts, from whom the governor himself nominated the members. Only a nobleman could be chairman of the Executive Board.

This reactionary policy was introduced through the agency of the tsar's councillors—Pobedonostsev, D. Tolstoy and Katkov. Pobedonostsev, the head of the Orthodox church—an arrant reactionary—exercised a great influence over Alexander. Katkov, that “faithful watchdog of the autocracy,” as Lenin described him, was a former professor of the Moscow University and editor of the crass reactionary newspaper, the *Moskovskiy Vyedomosti* (*The Moscow News*).

The government's reactionary policy was especially salient in the sphere of education. The tsar was an undisguised enemy of popular education. When the governor of Tobol informed him that there were very few literate people in Siberia, Alexander answered: “Thank God for it.” A peasant woman, a revolutionary, wanted to send her son to the gymnasium. When he learned of this Alexander wrote: “That's the terrible part about it—even the muzhik is trying to get into the gymnasium.” The Minister of Education, Delyanov, to please the tsar, issued a circular known as the “instructions re cooks' children” (1887) prohibiting the admission into the gymnasiums of “children of coachmen, servants, laundresses, and small shopkeepers, etc., who, except for those particularly gifted, should not be encouraged to rise above the sphere in which they were born.” In the countryside Pobedonostsev organized parish schools to counterbalance the zemstvo schools. These schools were conducted by benighted priests who made the children learn prayers in church Slavonic, a language they did not understand.

In 1884 a new university statute was issued. The University Councils were deprived of the right to elect the rector and the professors. The best professors were dismissed. Higher education for women was practically abolished. The tsaritsa made a special point of this, asserting that “a woman's business is her home and kitchen.”

Nicholas I's army system came into its own; manhandling and senseless drilling were reinstituted. In military technique the army lagged increasingly behind Western Europe.

**Increased National-Colonial Oppression.** The reactionary character of Alexander's reign was particularly evident in the prosecution of a policy of militant nationalism. The ban on the publication

of books in the Ukrainian language was reconfirmed in the Ukraine. In Byelorussia and Lithuania the use of the native tongues of the masses—Lithuanian and Byelorussian—was absolutely forbidden.

Alexander's government did its utmost to spread fierce anti-semitism. In 1881 there was a wave of pogroms against the Jews in the Ukraine. "You know, I must confess I'm glad when the Jews are beaten," Alexander said when he heard about the pogroms. The Minister of the Interior, Ignatiev, organizer of the Jewish pogroms, with the connivance of the tsar, ordered the local governors to take energetic measures "to protect the population against the obnoxious activities of the Jews which, according to local reports, were the cause of disorders." Further discrimination against the Jews was enacted in the reign of Alexander III. In addition to the establishment of a "place of settlement," the Jews were prohibited from acquiring land and from settling in the villages. In 1887 a quota was established for Jews in the secondary and higher educational institutions. The Jewish people were the most disfranchised of all the peoples of tsarist Russia, that prison of the peoples.

The chief tool of tsarism's repressive policy towards the non-Russian peoples was the Orthodox church. The missionaries converted the natives of the non-Russian regions to Christianity by trickery. The infamies practised by the tsarist government were strikingly revealed in the so-called Multan case: the Udmurts, who resisted conversion, were accused of making human sacrifices to their gods. In a brilliant speech delivered at the trial, the well-known writer, V. G. Korolenko, exposed the falsity of this accusation and secured the Udmurts' acquittal.

Central Asia underwent great changes in the 'eighties. The Transcaucasian Railway, built during the 'eighties, connected Samarkand with the Caspian Sea and opened the route for Russian merchandise to Central Asia and for Central-Asian cotton to Russia (by the Caspian and the Volga). Cotton cultivation in Central Asia developed on small peasant plots. The poor *dehkans* (peasants) had to bear a double yoke: dependence upon the local kulaks (beys) and landlords, and upon the Russian capitalists who bought up the raw cotton, and tsarist officials.

**Foreign Policy of Tsarism in the 'Eighties.** The 'eighties and 'nineties witnessed the rapid growth of capitalism in European countries and in the United States, and the transition of capitalism to its highest stage, that of imperialism. These years saw the partition of the world among the imperialist powers, and the seizure of still unoccupied territories.

In the 'eighties England seized Egypt and the Sudan; France—Tunisia and Madagascar in Africa and Tongking in Southern Asia; Italy began her advance against Abyssinia. Some countries were re-

duced to semi-colonial status: *e. g.*, English capital occupied a dominant position in China, Russian tsarism ruled in the north and English capitalism in the south of Persia.

The 'eighties and 'nineties witnessed the formation of international alliances among the imperialist powers. In 1879 Bismarck concluded a secret defensive alliance with Austria-Hungary directed against Russia. In 1882 Italy joined the Austro-German Alliance. Thus arose the triple alliance of Germany, Austria and Italy, directed against Russia and France, and paving the way for the world war of 1914.

Notwithstanding the conflict of interests between Russia and her old allies—Germany and Austria—the rupture between them did not take place at once. Tsarism hesitated to break with Germany and Austria, fearing a conflict with England, who viewed Russia's growing influence in Central Asia with suspicion and resentment. Fearing lest she be isolated, tsarist Russia concluded a treaty of mutual neutrality with Austria-Hungary and Germany in 1881. This treaty was called the Three Emperors' League. It was not, however, an enduring alliance on account of the growing clash of interests between Austria and Russia in the Balkans.

With the establishment of an independent Bulgarian principality in the Balkans Russia was able to consolidate her influence on the peninsula. Prince Alexander of Battenberg, a relative and nominee of Alexander II, placed by him on the throne of the Bulgarian principality, was at first ready to serve Alexander faithfully. A railway project was drawn up under Alexander III with the object of strengthening Russia's economic and political ties with Bulgaria and the other Balkan countries. The plan was suspended owing to a *coup d'état* in Bulgaria. Alexander of Battenberg was replaced by a creature of Austria. Tsarism broke off diplomatic relations with Bulgaria.

Events in the Balkans aggravated the relations between Russia and Austria, and Alexander refused to renew the treaty that had been concluded with Austria in 1881. The alliance of the three emperors ceased to exist. But Alexander still hesitated to break with Germany for fear that Russia would be isolated in Europe. Relations between England and Russia, too, took a turn for the worse. Tsarism's advance in Central Asia very nearly led to war between Russia and England in 1885-1886. The demarcation of the Russo-Persian frontiers in 1887 and of Russo-Afghan frontiers in 1895 considerably cleared the air.

Bismarck, who harboured designs of war against France, likewise decided to continue his alliance with Russia. In June 1887, a new agreement was concluded between Russia and Germany, kept secret from Austria-Hungary. This treaty, concluded for a period of three years, came to be known as the "re-insurance treaty," each party engaging to remain neutral in the event of Germany waging war against France, or Russia being involved in hostilities in the Balkans.

But the treaty of 1887 was necessarily unstable. The continuance of an alliance between tsarist Russia and Germany was contrary to the interests of the ruling classes of both countries. The tsarist government, in the interests of the Russian bourgeoisie, introduced a high tariff on imported manufactures. This measure adversely affected the German manufacturers. On the other hand, the Prussian landlords (the Junkers) could not reconcile themselves to the competition of Russian corn imports and high duties were imposed on Russian grain imported into Germany. The tariff was subsequently raised still higher. The Russian landlords were thus deprived of a profitable market. Furthermore, Bismarck retaliated to the introduction of protective tariffs in tsarist Russia by closing the German money market to Russian loans.

With an intense tariff war going on, there was no renewal of the treaty of 1887. The non-renewal of the treaty between Russia and Germany, the tariff war with Germany and the grave conflict between Russia and England combined with internal economic troubles created a difficult situation for Russia. In 1891-1892 Russia was visited by a terrible famine which dislocated the already disorganized national finances still more. What with the growing aggressiveness of imperialist Germany, which became particularly manifest upon the accession of Wilhelm II, and Russia's acute need of capital, tsarism was compelled to form an alliance with republican France. Soon Russian tsarism became a debtor, dependent on French bankers. In addition to rendering financial assistance, the French government undertook to keep the Russian political emigrants in France under police surveillance.

A Franco-Russian alliance was established by a number of treaties concluded in 1891-1893, under which tsarism occupied a subordinate position. Tsarist Russia undertook to place 800,000 men in the field against Germany in the event of the latter attacking France. Characterizing the role of tsarist Russia as an immense reserve of western imperialism, J. V. Stalin wrote that Russia was such a reserve "not only in that it gave free entry to foreign capital, which controlled such basic branches of Russia's national economy as the fuel and metal industries, but also in that it could supply the western imperialists with millions of soldiers."\*

Its predatory strivings balked in the Near East, tsarism in the early 'nineties turned its attention to the Far East, where the construction of the Siberian railway was started and preparations made for the seizure of Korea and Manchuria.

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\* Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Eng. ed., p. 17, Moscow 1945.

## 56. THE BEGINNING OF THE STRUGGLE FOR A MARXIST PARTY IN RUSSIA. THE MOROZOV STRIKE

**The "Emancipation of Labour" Group.** The first volume of Marx's work *Capital* was published in its Russian translation in 1872 (and promptly banned by the tsarist censorship). Marxism is the theory and tactics of the proletariat. But the proletariat in Russia was just coming into being in the 'seventies. Therefore the ideas of Marxism could not at the time become widespread among the workers in Russia.

The first Russian Marxist organization "The Emancipation of Labour" group was organized abroad, in Geneva (Switzerland), in 1883 by Plekhanov. Among the members of this group were Vera Zaslulich, Pavel Axelrod and others. In 1884 the first Marxist Social-Democratic group arose in Petersburg under the leadership of Blagoyev, the future leader of the Bulgarian Communists. Blagoyev's group carried on activities in Russia simultaneously with and independently of Plekhanov's group.

George Valentinovich Plekhanov (1856-1918), the well-known Russian Marxist, was first a Narodnik. Tsarist persecution drove him into emigration. His researches into the causes of Narodism's failure and the experience of the struggle of the West European workers, as well as the success of revolutionary propaganda among the Russian workers and his own studies of the works of Marx and Engels turned Plekhanov into a Marxist.

In 1883 Plekhanov published his book *Socialism and the Political Struggle*, and in 1885, a second one entitled *Our Differences*.

Plekhanov's works dealt a severe blow to Narodism. He showed that Russia had already taken the capitalist path of development, and thus refuted the basic postulate of the Narodniks alleging that Russia could avoid the capitalist path of development. Further, Plekhanov proved that side by side with the development of capitalism in Russia there was growing its gravedigger—the proletariat, the most revolutionary class of modern society.

The case was different with the peasantry. With the development of capitalism the peasantry not only does not grow as a class but, on the contrary, breaks up from year to year into the bourgeoisie (the kulaks) and the poor (the proletarians and the semi-proletarians) while the number of middle peasants decreases. Thus Plekhanov shattered the second false thesis of the Narodniks who claimed for the peasantry the role of leader of the revolution. Finally, Plekhanov shattered the mistaken theory of the Narodniks regarding the dominating significance in history of the individual "hero" and proved it to be an idealistic theory having nothing in common with concrete historical reality.



G. V. Plekhanov

The "Emancipation of Labour" group paved the way theoretically and ideologically for the Social-Democratic movement in Russia. It published a number of works by Marx and Engels (*The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, *Wage-Labour and Capital*, *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific* and others), which contributed greatly to the spread of Marxism in Russia. Plekhanov himself was a brilliant popularizer of the materialist conception of history and a profound critic of all idealistic theories in Russia and in Western Europe. Generations of Russian Marxists were educated on his philosophical works. Plekhanov's struggle against Narodism and the propaganda of Marxism

paved the way for the rise of a Marxist Social-Democratic Party in Russia. The "Emancipation of Labour" group, however, repudiated the peasantry as a revolutionary force capable of becoming the ally of the proletariat. The "Emancipation of Labour" group erroneously regarded the liberal bourgeoisie as the ally of the proletariat in the revolutionary struggle. Already in the 'eighties the leaders of the group expounded views which subsequently led to Menshevism.

The group was completely isolated from the struggle of the workers in Russia. V. I. Lenin characterized this stage in the struggle for a Marxist party in the following words: "Social-Democracy existed without a labour movement; it was, as it were, in its period of gestation."\*

**The Morozov Strike in 1885.** The working-class movement in Russia continued to develop during the industrial crisis of the 'eighties. It was still spontaneous and put forward only economic demands. With the beginning of the 'eighties strikes occurred at the Yartsev Mill (Smolensk gubernia), the Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Żirardów (Poland) and Krenholm Mills. The Morozov Mills at Orekhovo-Zuyevo employed over 8,000 workers. The exploitation at these mills was particularly ruthless. Morozov began to cut wages in 1882 when the

\* Lenin, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 272, Moscow 1946.

crisis set in and by 1884 had made five wage cuts. At the same time the workers were being plagued by fines, which amounted to as much as a quarter of the pay-roll (24 kopeks for every ruble earned). The fines on some workers absorbed as much as half their earnings. The average wage of a weaver in 1884 was 41 kopeks a day. But the worker did not receive his wage in cash. He was obliged to take rotten products in the mill store on account of his future earnings and pay high prices. Morozov made an annual income of half a million rubles on the exploitation of the workers. Not knowing how to fight, the workers bore this yoke, but unrest and discontent among them grew. In 1884 a new weaver; Pyotr Anisimovich Moiseyenko, came to work at the mills. He had only just returned from exile where he had been sent in 1879 as a member of the "Northern Union of Russian Workers" for participation in the St. Petersburg strikes. Moiseyenko, together with another former member of the "Northern Union," Luka Ivanov, and a young worker Vasili Volkov, started a revolutionary agitation among the workers of the mills. They jointly drew up demands which the workers were to present to Morozov. After a preliminary secret discussion in a tavern where the leading workers had gathered ostensibly for the purpose of having a drink, the demands were finally accepted at a meeting of fifty workers.

At six o'clock in the morning of January 7, 1885, one of the workers, by a pre-arranged signal, cried out: "Today's a holiday. Stop work, put out the gas! Women, go out!" The whole mills stopped work. The long pent-up hatred of the workers for their oppressors broke bounds. Despite Moiseyenko and Volkov's exhortations the workers smashed up the hateful mill store with its rotten products and wrecked the apartment of the mills manager. The scared administration called out the governor and troops.

The governor categorically demanded that the strike be called off immediately. Volkov, on behalf of the workers, presented him and the administration with their demands. Chief among them was the demand for the abolition of arbitrary fines. The workers told the governor: "According to the state law an employer should not impose excessive fines which are a burden to his workers. We, the workers, demand and ask that the fines do not exceed 5 per cent of the ruble earned. We are on the verge of starvation. We want to work and will work, but give us a chance to feed our families."

The administration refusing to concede, the strike went on.

Mass arrests among the strikers were then carried out on the personal instructions of Alexander III. Volkov, when being arrested, cried out to the assembled workers: "Am I for all or are you all for me?" "Everyone for you," the workers answered him in chorus and rushed to free the arrested man from the Cossacks. Failing in this they went in a huge crowd to the authorities demanding: "Free Vaska, he's our man."





P. A. Moiseyenko

After resisting eight days, during which six hundred active strikers were arrested and sent back to their native places, the strike was broken. P. A. Moiseyenko, Luka Ivanov, Vasili Volkov and other leaders of the strike were brought to trial. Such monstrous conditions prevailing at the Morozov Mills were brought to light at the trial that even the specially panelled jurymen were impressed and returned a verdict of not guilty. The tsarist court acquitted them.

However, Alexander III ordered Moiseyenko, who had been acquitted by the court, exiled administratively. Moiseyenko continued a revolutionary struggle all his life and was a participant of the October revolution of 1917.

During the Civil War he fought for the Soviet power in the ranks of the Red Army. Moiseyenko died in 1923, a member of the Bolshevik Party.

The Morozov strike caused Alexander and his ministers considerable alarm, and in 1886 a law was passed regulating fines and introducing pay-books. According to this law fines were to be converted to the use of the workers and were not to be a source of profit to the employers. The latter, however, evaded this law in every possible way. Prior to this a system of factory inspectors had been instituted.

The Morozov strike was an important factor in the development of the revolutionary struggle of the working class. It heralded the beginning of a mass working-class movement. Spontaneous strike outbreaks began to give way to organized action of the workers. The demands of the strikers no longer bore the tone of abject pleadings, but sounded as imperious demands of a new revolutionary class which had begun to be conscious of its social role. The Morozov strike showed the unity and solidarity that existed among the workers. The strike, in the words of the reactionary Katkov, showed tsarism that "it was dangerous to trifle with the masses." In this strike the proletariat of Russia came forward as the leading force of the revolutionary movement. For the first time in the history of Russia the revolutionary action of the workers compelled tsarism to make concessions and pass a law on the regulation of fines.

**The First Social-Democratic Workers' Circles in Russia.** The first Social-Democratic circles arose in Russia among the politically advanced workers at the end of the 'eighties and the beginning of the

'nineties. These circles were under the guidance of representatives of the Social-Democratic intelligentsia.

The workers in the Social-Democratic circles (under Fedoseyev in Kazan, Brusnyev in St. Petersburg, and others) studied the works of Marx, Engels and the history of the working-class movement. In 1891 a group of leading Petersburg workers, the first Social-Democrats, presented an address to the dying writer, N. V. Shelgunov (an associate of N. G. Chernyshevsky) in which they thanked Shelgunov for his selfless struggle against tsarism. At his funeral the same group of workers placed a wreath in the name of the St. Petersburg workers on his grave and turned the funeral into a political demonstration against the government. The same group organized in 1891 in St. Petersburg the first secret revolutionary meeting under the guise of a May Day outing. Several score workers met clandestinely on a wooded isle on the River Neva. Four workers made speeches calling for a struggle against the tsarist autocracy and capital. One of them, a weaver named Afanasyev, made a passionate appeal to the workers to organize and fight: "We shall learn, comrades, we shall unite, and organize ourselves into a strong party."

The first Social-Democratic circles were not yet linked up with the mass working-class movement, which was developing spontaneously and in an unorganized way.

V. I. Lenin, writing about the historical significance of the first political actions of the St. Petersburg workers, said: "The year 1891 is marked by the participation of the St. Petersburg workers in the demonstration at the funeral of Shelgunov, the political speeches at the May Day celebrations in St. Petersburg. We have before us the Social-Democratic demonstration of the vanguard workers with no mass movement yet in existence."\*

## 57. THE GROWTH OF CAPITALISM IN RUSSIA AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY AND ITS PLACE IN THE SYSTEM OF WORLD IMPERIALISM

**The Industrial Boom of the 'Nineties.** Russia in the second half of the 'nineties experienced an industrial boom which was a result both of the development of the home market and that of the world market which had drawn tsarist Russia into its orbit. A factor responsible for this boom was railway construction, which was of tremendous importance to the development of the country's entire economic system.

Extensive railway construction had been going on in Russia since the 'seventies and 'eighties, which saw the building of big railways such as the Moscow-Kursk, Moscow-Voronezh and Moscow-Nizhni

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\* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. VII, p. 105, Moscow 1937.

Novgorod (now Gorky) lines. The opening of the 'nineties saw the termination of the Kursk-Kharkov-Odessa, the Kharkov-Sevastopol and Kharkov-Rostov railways. These lines linked wheat-growing Ukraine with the ports of the Black Sea and important waterways. The development of Russia's railway network is evident from the following figures: the total railway mileage comprised 26,024 kilometres in 1885, 30,596 in 1890 and 53,234 kilometres in 1900. The total length of railways thus doubled within 15 years (1885 to 1900). The average yearly accretion constituted over 2,000 kilometres. Nevertheless, in density of railways, Russia still lagged far behind Western Europe. European Russia in 1895 had only 9.7 kilometres of railway per thousand square kilometres of territory as compared to 106 kilometres in England and 80 kilometres in Germany.

A line of great importance was the Siberian railroad, which took 15 years to build. The Siberian railway, called "the great way," having a total length of 7,000 kilometres, was started simultaneously at both ends—from Vladivostok and Chelyabinsk. The Siberian railway was practically completed by 1901 with the construction of the Transbaikalian line. The building of this railway led to an increased influx of settlers to Siberia from European Russia. The railway in Central Asia connected this important cotton area with the centre of the country. The extension of the railway system tended to strengthen the integral national market. Russian railways were built on foreign capital received by way of loans or by the granting of concessions to foreign railway interests.

Railway construction promoted the growth of industry in Russia. The growth of industrial output in Russia during the boom is illustrated by the following figures: in 1887 there were 30,888 industrial enterprises employing 1,318,000 workers, while 10 years later, in 1897, the number of enterprises had risen to 39,000 and the number of employed to 2,098,000. The value of output increased commensurately from 1,334,000,000 rubles to 2,899,000,000 rubles. The number of big enterprises rose rapidly. In 1895 enterprises employing over 500 workers accounted for 45 per cent of the total number of workers employed in industry. Concentration in industry steadily increased, and by 1902 big enterprises employing over 1,000 workers accounted for 50 per cent of all the industrial workers. During these years the degree of concentration in industry was higher in Russia than it was in Germany, where only 15 per cent of the total workers were employed at big enterprises. Russian industry, however, was considerably below the level of the advanced capitalist countries both in output and equipment.

During the period of industrial boom coal and oil production in Russia trebled, while that of pig iron more than trebled. Industrial progress was especially striking in the Ukraine and Transcaucasia. The Donets Basin became the centre of coal mining. The 'nineties

saw the development of iron ore mining in Krivoy Rog which, with Donets coal formed a basis for the rapid development of Ukrainian metallurgy. A result of the investment of large French and Belgian capital in Ukrainian metallurgy was that it rapidly outstripped the mining and metallurgical industry of the Urals. Over half of the pig iron production in Russia since the 'nineties was supplied by the blast furnaces of the Ukraine. A feature of Ukrainian metallurgy was its high state of concentration. Seven Ukrainian works produced over a third of the total pig iron output. Sixteen per cent of pig iron production in Russia were accounted for by two great Ukrainian works with an annual output of over 10,000,000 poods each.

The salt lakes of the Ukraine near Slavyansk were utilized for the establishment of a chemical industry. The production of rock salt was developed at the Bakhmut mines (now Artemovsk) around which industrial settlements grew up.

Beginning with the 'nineties capitalism gained considerable ground in Transcaucasia. The oil industry, chiefly with the aid of foreign capital, began to make headway in the latter half of the 'eighties in Baku, which became the industrial centre of Transcaucasia.

An important economic factor was the conclusion in the 'nineties of railway construction in Transcaucasia which linked up the capital of the Caucasus, Tiflis, with Baku, Batum, Erivan and Kars. A railway line was built between Derbent and Petrovsk, establishing communication between the Caucasus and European Russia. A pipe line was laid between Baku and Batum. Batum's big kerosene works produced mostly for export. In Georgia the leading industry was manganese mining, concentrated at Chiaturi in the gubernia of Kutais. The output of coal in Tkviuli increased. The biggest enterprises in Tiflis were the Railway Repair Depots of the Transcaucasia lines which employed over 3,000 workers in 1900. The bulk of Georgia's industry, however, was made up of petty handicraft enterprises. The condition of the workers in Transcaucasia, who were subject to the double yoke of capitalist exploitation and colonial oppression, was more miserable than that of the workers in Central Russia. Russian factory legislation did not apply to the Caucasus, where the institution of factory inspectors was not introduced until 1902 after the incidence of a mass working-class movement in Transcaucasia.

The tsarist government was obliged to foster the growth of capitalism in the country. Already in Alexander III's time a protective tariff was introduced (1891) establishing high customs duties on imports. This placed the home market under the exclusive control of Russian capitalists. Tsarism's policy, aimed at protecting the interests of the bourgeoisie, was prosecuted by Witte, the Minister of Finance, who succeeded in greatly stimulating the growth of capitalist industry and consolidating the state finances.

The development of capitalism in Russia was hampered by the instability of the currency. During the Crimean war the exchange of banknotes for specie was suspended, and the only currency was fluctuating paper money. The absence of a stable currency had a deleterious effect on trade and industry. Witte in 1897 carried out a reform of the currency. Banknotes were secured by a gold reserve and made exchangeable for gold at the rate of 66 kopeks per paper ruble.

Witte introduced a government monopoly for the sale of alcohol, which yielded huge profits to the treasury. Thanks to Witte's efforts the St. Petersburg banks began to play an important role in the country's economic life.

All these reforms were implemented by the tsarist government with the aid of foreign loans. Russia's annual payments on loans amounted to 275,000,000 rubles, comprising 20 per cent of all the state expenditure. The influx of foreign capital during the industrial boom of the 'nineties considerably increased. Attracted by prospects of earning large profits from the exploitation of cheap and abundant labour-power foreign capitalists readily exported their capital to Russia.

The 'nineties witnessed the beginning of monopolistic organizations in Russia and the fusion of industrial with bank capital. Eight big banks in 1899 owned more than half of the total bank capital which they invested in new enterprises and in promoting trusts and syndicates. In the late 19th century syndicates were formed in the oil, metallurgical and coal mining industries.

Foreign capital investments in Russian industry during the industrial boom increased fourfold, attaining 1,000,000,000 rubles in 1900. Between 1896 and 1900, 190 joint-stock companies were formed, a fourth of which were foreign enterprises. Half of all foreign capital belonged to the French and Belgian bourgeoisie. These investments of foreign capital in Russian industry and the growth of Russia's state debts to foreign capitalists which reached the huge figure of 4,265,000,000 rubles in 1899, made Russian tsarism and Russian capitalism dependent on Western European capital, especially that of France.

Tsarist Russia became the vast reserve of western imperialism. She provided free access for foreign capital which controlled such important branches of the national economy of Russia as the fuel and metallurgical industries.

Industrial development, nevertheless, was retarded by the prevailing survivals of serfdom in the countryside, the bulwark of which were the big latifundia of the landowners. Thirty thousand landowners owned 70,000,000 dessiatins at the end of the 19th century, making an average of 2,330 dessiatins per estate. On the other hand ten million peasant households possessed a total of 75,000,000 dessiatins, or an average of 7 dessiatins per farm. During the decade between 1890 and 1900 Russia experienced four years of famine and two years of

serious crop failures. Especially terrible was the famine of 1891, which affected forty million peasants and caused mass epidemic diseases. Systematic starvation, the cholera epidemic of 1892 and, chief of all, the increased plundering of the peasants by the landlords and the government reduced peasant economy to ruin and the peasant population to the verge of extinction.

Agriculture in Russia was furthermore hit by the world agrarian crisis of the 'eighties and 'nineties. But the principal causes of peasant ruination and the disastrous state of agriculture were to be found in the survivals of serfdom, the ruinous methods of farming and monstrous exploitation of the peasantry which were an outcome of the reforms of 1861.

Summing up the results of capitalist development in the 'nineties, Lenin pointed out that in comparison with the rate of development prior to the reform this growth of capitalism in Russia was to be considered a rapid one. But if this rate of development be taken in comparison with what it might have been under the contemporary level of technique and culture it is admittedly a slow one. "Nor could it be anything else but slow," wrote Lenin in conclusion, "for there is not a single capitalist country in the world in which ancient institutions, which are incompatible with capitalism, which retard its development, which immeasurably worsen the conditions of the producers who suffer from capitalism as well as from the insufficient development of capitalism, have survived in such abundance as they have survived in Russia."\*

Thus, tsarist Russia at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries was already drawn into the system of world imperialism, occupying therein a subordinate position.

**Nicholas II—the Last Russian Tsar (1894-1917).** The last Russian emperor was the eldest son of Alexander III—Nicholas II. He received his education under the direction of the arch-reactionary Pobedonostsev. During the first Russian census of 1897 Nicholas II wrote in his questionnaire:

Name . . . . Romanov, N. A.  
 Estate . . . . Emperor of All Russia  
 Chief occupation . . . . Master of the land of Russia  
 Subsidiary occupation . . . . Landowner

His wife, by origin a German princess, wrote also:

Name . . . . Romanova, Alexandra Fyodorovna  
 Native language . . . . German  
 Chief occupation . . . . Mistress of the land of Russia

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\* Lenin, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 385, Moscow 1934.

These German-Russian self-styled "masters of the land of Russia" were the richest landowners in Russia and in all the world. Nicholas II and his family owned about 100,000,000 dessiatins of land.

Intellectually limited and mediocre, this "Emperor of All Russia" was endowed with absolute power. He was weak-willed, vindictive, and cruel. He demanded that the revolutionary movement be suppressed by ruthless shootings and executions. When a general who had been sent to crush an uprising reported to the tsar that the number of killed was small, the tsar angrily announced: "Not enough blood, general!" and dismissed him.

Nicholas II was an unmitigated adherent of the inviolability of autocracy and Orthodoxy. At a reception of a zemstvo deputation in 1895 Nicholas declared: "There have been heard the voices of people lured by senseless dreams of representatives of the zemstvos sharing in the conduct of internal affairs. Let it be known to all that I will maintain the principle of autocracy as firmly and steadfastly as did my late father."

Nicholas II's reign began with a bloody catastrophe. A popular fête had been arranged in Khodynka field during the coronation ceremonies in Moscow in 1896. Attracted by rumours of royal gifts, huge crowds of people flocked to Khodynka. The ground, cut by ditches and gullies, had been carelessly levelled out. The government took no measures to assure the maintenance of order, with the result that a large number of men, women and children, estimated at some tens of thousands, were crushed and trampled to death. This disaster earned for Nicholas II the popular epithet of *The Bloody*. In the morning after the catastrophe Nicholas II accompanied by his wife and foreign guests arrived on the scene. The dead bodies had already been removed, and sand sprinkled over the bloodstains. That evening Nicholas and Alexandra Fyodorovna danced at the ball as if nothing whatever had happened.

Nicholas II continued the reactionary policy of his father, whose ministers retained their posts. Particularly reactionary was tsarism's policy towards the oppressed peoples.

The tsarist government launched a crusade against the autonomy of Finland. General Bobrikov, who proclaimed the autonomy of Finland to be "an invention of pernicious elements" was appointed governor-general of Finland. Plehve, a rank reactionary, was appointed State Secretary for Finland. On the insistence of Bobrikov and Plehve, Nicholas II promulgated a manifesto in 1899 restricting the rights of the Finnish Diet. In Poland the tsarist authorities dealt ruthlessly with the main revolutionary force, the proletariat.

Tsarism prosecuted a harsh colonial policy in the Caucasus. The tsarist viceroy, Prince Golitsyn, persecuted the Armenians. The Armenian schools were closed, the property of the Armenian church con-



Rebel Andijans in chains

fiscated. Resistance on the part of the Armenian population was put down with armed force.

The peoples of Central Asia too were an object of ruthless oppression and exploitation by Russian tsarism in the 'nineties.

The increase in cotton cultivation was attended by the increased exploitation of the Uzbeks. The Ferghana Valley (formerly the khanate of Kokand) became the centre of cotton cultivation. Most of the cotton was cultivated by the *chairikers* as the landless peasants were called. They received land and cotton seed from the owners of the land, the beys. The *chairikers* worked as share-croppers, receiving only half of the harvest. Still worse off were the *karandas* who received only one-third or even one-fifth of the harvest. The *chairikers* and *karandas* were absolutely dependent on the buyers of cotton and on the beys, the owners of the land. In the 'nineties state taxation here was increased threefold.

Increased colonial oppression provoked an uprising in Andijan in May, 1898. Preparation for it was carried on in all the large centres of Central Asia. The aim of the uprising was to overthrow the power of the Russian colonizers. Afghan merchants secretly supplied the insurgents with English arms. On the night of May 18, 1898, an armed detachment of 2,000 Uzbeks and Kirghiz attacked the Andijan garrison in an attempt to seize Andijan. The *ishan* (a Mussulman scholar), Mahommed Ali, led the uprising.



He proclaimed a *hazavat* (holy war) against tsarist Russia.

The uprising was very short-lived and tsarism meted out cruel reprisals on the insurgents. Twenty men were executed including the leader of the uprising, Mahommed Ali, and 348 Uzbeks were sentenced to penal servitude. In spite of its outward religious character, the Andijan uprising was, in its class essence, a protest of the masses of the Uzbeks and Kirghiz against the predatory colonial policy of tsarism in Central Asia. A punitive expedition razed three insurgent Uzbek villages whose lands were turned over to Russian settlers. The home villages of the insurgents were made to pay huge indemnities.

## 58. THE BEGINNING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITY OF LENIN AND STALIN

The Centre of the International Revolutionary Movement of the Proletariat Shifts to Russia. A period of relatively peaceful development set in in West Europe after the defeat of the Paris Commune in 1871 and there were no big revolutionary actions among the proletariat of Western Europe until the end of the first quarter of the 20th century.

The Social-Democrats had made considerable progress in all countries. The trade union and co-operative movements had expanded and strengthened. The activity of the Social-Democratic parties resolved itself ever more to a mere participation in parliamentary elections and parliamentary co-operation with the bourgeoisie. The parties of the Second International took a resolute stand against the dictatorship of the proletariat. They were opposed to the Socialist revolution and advocated only reforms.

Engels died in 1895 and the Second International was left without a leader who could guide the proletariat in its struggle for a Socialist revolution and correct the mistakes and opportunist vacillations of the Socialist parties of the Second International. At the end of the 19th century the centre of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat shifted to Russia.

An unceasing revolutionary struggle went on in Russia after the peasant reform of 1861. The peasants continued their spontaneous fight for the complete liquidation of landownership by the gentry. The young, but rapidly growing proletariat, began its historical struggle against capitalism and tsarism.

Marx and Engels even as far back as the 'seventies and 'eighties closely followed the development of the revolutionary struggle in Russia. They regarded tsarism as the main bulwark of reaction in Europe and hoped that the victory of the revolution in Russia would serve as a signal for a proletarian revolution in the West.

The weakness of the Russian working-class movement of the 'eighties lay in its spontaneous character and in the fact that it was not yet linked up with the Socialist movement. The weakness of Social-Democracy lay in the fact that it was not backed by a mass working-class movement. The problem to be tackled was that of uniting the working-class movement with Socialism, a task the ground for which had been prepared by the preceding development of the Russian working class. In 1895 the "League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class," led by V. I. Lenin, linked up the economic struggle with the political struggle against tsarism.

**The Strike Movement of the 'Nineties.** The industrial boom of the 'nineties activated the strike struggle in Russia. Between 1895 and 1899, 221,000 workers went on strike. The working-class movement was becoming an important force in the political life of the country. The workers on strike in Yuzovka (now Stalino) in 1892 wrecked the factory. Not knowing who was really to blame for their misery, the workers turned the edge of their hatred not against the capitalists and capital, but against the factories and the machines. The strike was crushed by armed force, and bloody reprisals taken against the workers. In the spring and summer of 1895 the strike movement spread throughout the central industrial region. The workers demanded an increase in rates, a reduction of hours and the prohibition of fines. The strike at the Yaroslav Mills in 1895 was brutally crushed by troops. The officers of the Fanagorisky Grenadier's Regiment who led the reprisals against the workers received the tsar's thanks for their work. "You men of the Fanagorisky regiment are fine fellows! Thanks!" the tsar telegraphed the officers.

In the autumn of 1895 the workers went on strike at the Thornton Mills in St. Petersburg (owned by an Englishman). This strike was led by the St. Petersburg "League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class," headed by Lenin. His leaflet to the men and women workers raised the strikers' spirits and helped them win the strike.

**V. I. Lenin.** The great leader of the world proletariat, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (Ulyanov), was born in Simbirsk (now the city of Ulyanovsk) on April 10 (22), 1870. His father was a schoolteacher. All the children of Ilya Nikolayevich Ulyanov took part in the revolutionary struggle. Vladimir Ilyich, under the guidance of his mother, learned to read at the age of five, and ever afterwards reading was his favourite pastime. When he was ten he entered the gymnasium in Simbirsk. He was an excellent student and was awarded a medal for good scholarship on graduation. The habit of systematic, persistent and thorough work acquired in childhood remained with Lenin throughout his life. His exercise-books were always in perfect condition. He worked systematically and diligently over his school composi-

tions: first he sketched the plan of his composition in accordance with which he collected the material, arranged it accurately and worked it up carefully. Lenin used the same method subsequently when writing his great works. Under the guidance of his father (a follower of the ideas of Chernyshevsky and Nekrasov) Lenin studied all the works of the great Russian writers in his childhood and youth, and grew to entertain a deep love for Russian literature and the great Russian people.

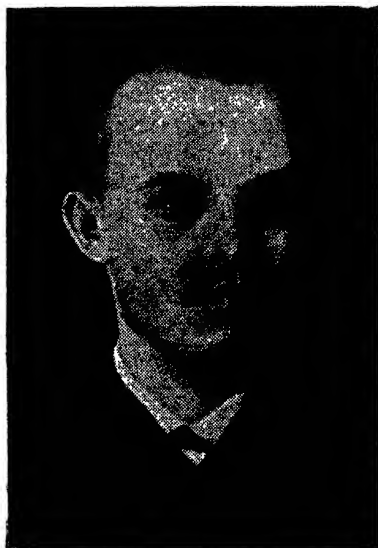
Lenin first heard of the revolutionary movement from his oldest brother Alexander, a member of the *Narodnaya Volya*. Alexander Ulyanov was executed for organizing an attempt on the life of Alexander III (1887). The death of his beloved brother made a deep impression on seventeen-year-old Volodya Ulyanov. Then it was that he realized what harm terrorist methods were causing to the development of the mass movement of the toilers. "No, we shall not take that path. That is not the way to go," said Lenin when news came of the execution of his brother.

V. I. Lenin entered the University of Kazan in 1887, at the age of seventeen. Soon after he was arrested for taking part in student demonstrations, expelled from the university and exiled to the village. The following conversation took place between him and the police officer on his arrest: "What are you rebelling for, young man? Don't you see there's a wall before you?" "A wall, yes, but a rotten one, just prod it and it will topple over," answered Vladimir Ilyich.

During his exile in the country, and later, on his return from exile to Kazan, V. I. Lenin made an intensive study of the works of Marx and Engels. After his arrival in Samara Lenin organized the first circle of Samara Marxists. In Samara V. I. Lenin made a study of the development of capitalism and the position of the peasantry in Russia.

In the autumn of 1893 Lenin moved to St. Petersburg where he immediately assumed a leading position among the St. Petersburg Marxists. In 1894 Lenin read a number of lectures which were later embodied in his well-known work: *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats*. In this work V. I. Lenin proved that the liberal Narodniks of the 'nineties renounced the revolutionary struggle against the tsarist government which had been carried on by the Narodnik-revolutionaries of the 'seventies. Lenin put the finishing stroke to Narodism as the enemy of Marxism. The offsprings of Narodism had reconciled themselves with the tsarist government and were prepared "to vegetate under the wing of the humane landlords and liberal administrators." Lenin proved that the program of the liberal Narodniks of the 'nineties reflected the interests of the kulak elements of the village, that it was

at bottom hostile to Socialism. Already in this first work of his, Lenin pointed out with deep insight the historic role of the Russian proletariat as the leader of the coming revolution in Russia which it would bring about in alliance with the peasantry. This was the great Leninist idea of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry. *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats* ended in the following words, which came true with the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917: "The Russian worker, rising at the head of all the democratic elements, will overthrow absolutism and lead the Russian proletariat (side by side with the proletariat of all countries) along the straight road of open political struggle towards the victorious Communist Revolution." \*



V. I. Lenin in 1892

Lenin at the same time waged a struggle against the so-called "legal Marxists" (Struve, Tugan-Baranovsky and others). Legal Marxism was an attempt on the part of the bourgeoisie to adapt Marxism to its own ends. The "legal Marxists" cutting out the very core of Marxism—namely, the doctrine of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat—perverted the theory of Marx; glossed over the class contradictions of capitalist society and called upon the workers to support the capitalists unreservedly. "No, let us acknowledge our lack of culture and go to capitalism for schooling," wrote Struve. Lenin exposed legal Marxism as a bourgeois perversion of the teachings of Marx.

At the end of the 'nineties new agents of the bourgeoisie—the "Economists"—who had influence among the more backward sections of the workers, began to penetrate the labour movement. They said that the workers should confine themselves to an economic struggle, and leave the political struggle to the liberal bourgeoisie, whose political demands they should support. Rejecting independent political demands and the political organization of the proletariat, the

\* Lenin, *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats*, Eng. ed., p. 205, Moscow 1946.

"Economists" strove to subordinate the interests of the working class to those of the bourgeoisie who sought a compromise with tsarism. In 1899 while in exile Lenin called a conference of seventeen exiled Social-Democrats who were living in the vicinity and they issued a trenchant protest, written by Lenin, denouncing the bourgeois views of the "Economists."

Lenin called the "Economists" the vehicles of bourgeois influence over the proletariat. The Russian "Economists" advocated the same views as the opponents of Marxism in the West European Socialist parties. Therefore the denunciation of the "legal Marxists" and the "Economists" by Lenin was of tremendous international significance. In his famous work, *What Is To Be Done?* written in 1902, Lenin exposed and defeated Economism ideologically.

"Lenin did indeed restore the revolutionary content of Marxism, which had been immured by the opportunists of the Second International."\*

**The St. Petersburg "League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class."** In his struggle against the Narodniks, the "legal Marxists" and the "Economists," V. I. Lenin paved the way for the organization of a proletarian, revolutionary Marxist party in Russia. Its embryo was the St. Petersburg "League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class," which, under Lenin's leadership, was first in Russia to unite Socialism to the working-class movement. Until then Social-Democracy and the working-class movement in Russia had developed apart from each other, and were therefore weak. "With the establishment of Russian Social-Democracy (1883)," wrote Lenin, "the Russian working-class movement drew even closer to Russian Social-Democracy at every important step it made, striving to merge with it."\*\* By bringing about this fusion, Lenin performed the task which, as he himself said, had been set by Marx and Engels themselves, the creators of "that revolutionary theory which explained the need for this fusion and set the Socialists the task of organizing the class struggle of the proletariat." \*\*\*

Together with the politically advanced workers of St. Petersburg—Babushkin, Shelgunov and others—Lenin began to build up a Marxist party in Russia. In the beginning of 1895 the League started mass political agitation among the workers.

Beginning with the autumn of 1895 the St. Petersburg "League of Struggle" organized and led strikes. Together with the workers Lenin formulated the demands of the strikers. Led by the "League

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\* Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Eng. ed., p. 14, Moscow 1945.

\*\* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. II, p. 536, Moscow 1937.

\*\*\* *Ibid.*

of Struggle" 30,000 St. Petersburg weavers went out on strike in 1896, during the coronation festivities. They demanded a reduction of working hours by legislation and the payment of wages for stoppage of work during the coronation. This strike of the St. Petersburg mill workers, interfering as it did with the coronation festivities and demonstrating by revolutionary action before the assembled representatives of all the foreign powers the instability of the autocracy, was an event of the greatest political significance. Under the pressure of the strikers the tsarist government promised to reduce the working day. It did not, however, keep its promise. The "League of Struggle" thereupon organized

a second strike in 1897 which compelled the government to pass a law limiting the working day to eleven and a half hours.

These strikes, the like of which were unknown to the West European working-class movement, showed to the world that the proletariat had become the leader of the revolutionary movement in Russia. The International Socialist Congress in London (1896) sent a message of greetings to the Russian proletariat. In this message it said: "The Congress regards the organization of the Russian proletariat to be the best guarantee against the tsarist government which is one of the last bulwarks of European reaction."

Although Lenin had been arrested in December 1895, he continued to lead the "League of Struggle" from prison. In 1897 the tsarist government exiled V. I. Lenin for three years to Eastern Siberia. He lived in exile in the village of Shushenskoye, Minusinsky uyezd, Yenisei gubernia, from 1897 to 1900. During his imprisonment and exile, V. I. Lenin was engaged on his great work, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, which he completed in 1899.

Before his banishment Lenin had taken up the task of uniting the separate Social-Democratic organizations into a Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. His arrest prevented him from completing this work. In March 1898, in V. I. Lenin's absence, the First Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (R.S.D.L.P.) was



I. V. Babushkin

held in Minsk. The Congress proclaimed the formation of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party. However, the attempt to form a party at this congress failed. The Central Committee and the majority of the participants of the congress were shortly arrested. But no persecutions on the part of the tsarism could check the growing revolutionary movement in Russia.

**J. V. Stalin.** In the 'nineties a working-class movement started to develop in Transcaucasia, where a revolutionary situation had been created as a result of the development of capitalism, oppressive land relations and the predatory colonizing policy of tsarism.

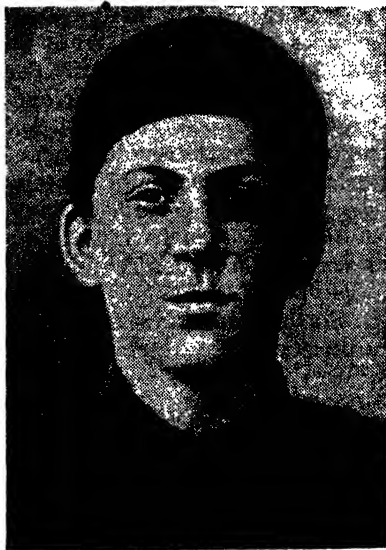
The proletariat grew rapidly in the developing industrial centres (Baku, Batum, Tiflis). Beginning with 1887 there were repeated strikes of the workers of the Tiflis railway workshops, who, like the Morozov Mills workers, fought against the arbitrary imposition of fines, and demanded that they be regulated by law. Most often these strikes were led by Russian workers, who had been banished to Transcaucasia for taking part in strikes in Russia. Not infrequently they were arrested by the police and sent back to their native places. In the 'nineties the number of strikes in Transcaucasia increased. Politically advanced Russian workers—members of Lenin's "League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class," came to the head of the working-class movement. Under the influence of the Georgian working-class movement, the Georgian peasants also rose in struggle. Beginning with 1894 revolutionary outbreaks among the peasantry in Georgia were almost an annual occurrence.

Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin (Djugashvili) stood at the head of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat in Transcaucasia at the end of the 'nineties.

J. V. Stalin was born on December 9 (21) 1879 in the town of Gori, Tiflis gubernia, in a poor family. His father was a worker in a shoe factory in Tiflis and his mother went out to work by the day. Stalin since childhood lived among the workers and peasants who fought against tsarist oppression, against the capitalists and landlords. Even as a boy Stalin was stirred to indignation by the monstrous exploitation of the toilers and he explained to the workers and peasants their position.

J. V. Stalin's father did all he could to give him an education and sent him to the church school in Gori. He showed remarkable ability at school, where he mastered his studies with great thoroughness. His leisure was devoted to reading and assiduous efforts to widen his education. At this period he became acquainted with Darwin's theory and turned atheist. He propagandized atheism among his schoolmates, whom he used to tell that it was necessary to study in order to be able to help the workers and peasants. In 1894 Stalin graduated the school with honours.

After graduation Stalin went to an ecclesiastical seminary in Tiflis. Here, at the age of fifteen, he associated himself with the underground Tiflis groups of Russian Marxists and began to engage in revolutionary activities. During his seminary years Stalin worked hard over his Marxist education. Books were his constant, inseparable companions, but the books he needed were very difficult to obtain. The inspector kept a close watch to see that forbidden books did not fall into the hands of the seminary students. Stalin had no money to buy books and sometimes he would glance over the books at the second-hand bookshops. He had such an excellent memory that he could then give a gist of the contents of these books to his friends. Soon Stalin became



J. V. Stalin in 1898

the leader of two illegal Marxist circles at the seminary. A room was rented in the city for study purposes, the monthly rent of five rubles being pooled among the seminarists. In the circle they studied the works of Marx, Engels, Plekhanov, Chernyshevsky, Belinsky, Dobrolyubov, Pisarev and Herzen.

Having on one occasion with great difficulty obtained the first volume of *Capital* they copied it out by hand and then studied this copy in the circle.

In 1898 Stalin joined the Tiflis Social-Democratic organization and became a member of the first Georgian Social-Democratic organization, "Messameh Dassy." In the same year he read Lenin's book *The Economic Contents of Narodism and Its Criticism in the Work of Mr. Struve*. Already at that time Stalin keenly desired to make Lenin's acquaintance. "I must see him at all costs," he said to his comrades. From that moment J. V. Stalin became the loyal disciple and follower of Lenin.

In 1899 Stalin, to use his own words, was "thrown out of the Orthodox ecclesiastical seminary for propagandizing Marxism." After his expulsion from the seminary he became a professional revolutionary, giving himself up entirely to the fight for the cause of the working class.

Soon J. V. Stalin came to the head of the revolutionary wing of the Georgian Social-Democrats, "Messameh Dassy" (third group).



It was called the third because it had been preceded by two other groups: one which banked on the intelligentsia nobility, the other—on the bourgeoisie. The third declared themselves Marxists. But most of the members of the "Messameh Dassy" propagandized legal Marxism, which was opposed to the hegemony of the working class in the bourgeois-democratic revolution and against the dictatorship of the proletariat. On the national question the majority of the group adhered to the nationalistic standpoint which advocated the unity of interests of all Georgians. In 1895 this group was joined by the revolutionary Marxist, Alexander Tsulukidze, and in 1897—by the splendid Marxist-organizer, Lado (Vladimir) Ketskhoveli. In 1898 J. V. Stalin joined it. Stalin, Tsulukidze and Ketskhoveli formed a genuine revolutionary minority in the "Messameh Dassy." Stalin demanded the organization of an illegal press and an independent proletarian party, considering that it was essential to start mass agitation among the workers and an open struggle against the autocracy. Most of the members of the "Messameh Dassy" were opposed to this. These differences led to a split in the "Messameh Dassy."

In Tiflis at this time Stalin was directing eight workers' circles. He was able, by bringing in the immediate vital interests of the workers, to lead them up to the basic tasks of the working-class movement. His talks with the workers were simple and interesting, always based on facts. Here is a striking illustration of his method of agitation. Taking advantage of the fact that the workers happened to be attending lectures on popular astronomy Stalin, during one of his talks, said to a worker: "The sun—never fear, will not lose its way,—now you learn in what way the revolutionary cause should move and fix me up a little illegal printshop."

Members of these circles relate in their reminiscences of Stalin's discourses: "Comrade Stalin always spoke interestingly, simply, always giving examples and facts. He demanded that we, on our part, hold similar talks in the factories with the other workers."

In 1900 Stalin organized a strike at the Repair Depots of the Transcaucasian Railway in Tiflis (now bearing his name). A number of strikes were held in Tiflis under his leadership: at a tobacco factory, the Adelskhanov tannery, a printshop and elsewhere. The *Iskra*, the illegal organ of the revolutionary Marxists edited by Lenin, found an ardent adherent in Stalin from the very moment of its publication.

J. V. Stalin, simultaneously with V. I. Lenin, waged an irreconcilable struggle against the Narodniks in Georgia and against the Georgian "legal Marxists," who had a majority in the "Messameh Dassy." In the spring of 1901, Stalin, to avoid arrest, went into hiding, and ever since, right up to the February Revolution of 1917, he led the heroic underground life of a professional revolutionary.

Bolshevik organizations, led by Stalin, arose and developed in

Georgia and Transcaucasia in an irreconcilable struggle against the enemies of Marxism-Leninism.

In these activities Stalin had the energetic assistance of two remarkable proletarian revolutionaries—A. Tsulukidze, who died in 1905 and Lado Ketskhoveli, who was treacherously killed in the Metekh Fortress in Tiflis in 1903.

## 59. EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND ART AT THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY

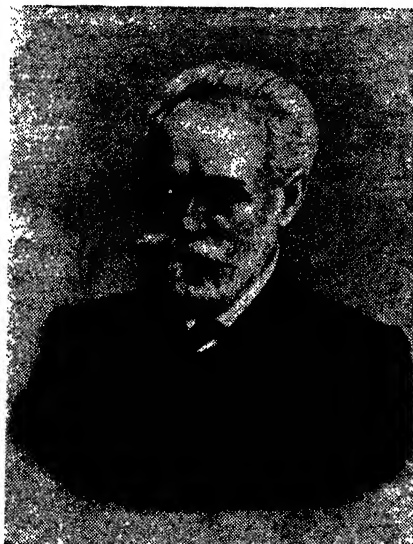
**Russian Science in the Late 19th Century.** The government of Nicholas II continued the policy of its predecessors against enlightenment. Growing capitalism, however, needed engineers, technicians and scientists. Foreign specialists employed in Russian enterprises jealously guarded their knowledge and did not share it with Russian engineers. The number of Russian specialists was negligible. To meet capitalism's demand for trained personnel the Minister of Finance, Witte, opened three polytechnical institutes and numerous secondary commercial and technical schools.

Science was hard put to it in the reign of Nicholas II. Eminent Russian scientists not only received no recognition in tsarist Russia but were forced by persecution of tsarism to migrate in order to continue their scientific work abroad.

The famous Russian biologist, Ilya Ilyich Mechnikov (1845-1916) was obliged to resign his Chair at the Novorossiisk University (in Odessa) and migrate to Paris where he became one of the leading



I. I. Mechnikov in his laboratory



I. P. Pavlov

scientists of the world-famous Pasteur Institute. In 1908 Mechnikov was awarded the Nobel Prize for his splendid work on immunity. Mechnikov created and elaborated the theory of phagocytosis—the phenomenon of the ingestion of alien bodies and bacteria by the phagocytes, or “devouring cells.”

Another great Russian scientist, the physiologist Ivan Petrovich Pavlov (1849-1936), was awarded the Nobel Prize for his classic researches in the physiology of digestion. Pavlov won world fame for his remarkable studies in the field of the higher nervous system. Pavlov further elaborated the theory of M. Sechenov on the reflexes of the brain. His work on the study of the higher nervous system

helped the proletariat in its struggle against idealism and clericalism. Tsarism did all in its power to hinder these researches. It was only under the Soviet government, which built a special scientific centre for the great scientist at Koltyshevo (near Leningrad), that Pavlov was given ample scope to carry on his work. Pavlov was a member of nearly all the scientific academies of the world.

The Russian inventor P. Y. Yablochkov (1847-1894) invented the first electric arc lamp in the world. To develop his invention he was obliged to leave Russia and go to Paris where he took a patent in 1876. The Louvre stores and Place de l'Opéra were illuminated by the so-called “Yablochkov candles.” The first electric light in the world was called “Russian light” by the French. Yablochkov offered his invention to the Russian Ministry of War but they did not even deign to answer him. Yablochkov's enterprise received no support and the Russian inventor died in poverty.

Another Russian inventor, Ladygin, created the first incandescent electric lamp. In America during the hearing of rival claims by Edison and Swan for priority in the invention of the incandescent lamp, both parties were turned down by the court which cited the priority of Ladygin's invention. In 1890 Ladygin produced a filament electric lamp made from molybden and tungsten. But these inventions were developed in America and not in Russia. Ladygin was compelled

to go to work in a factory as a common fitter. Soon a similar lamp, invented by Edison, conquered the world.

A Russian electrical engineer, Alexander Stepanovich Popov (1859-1905), was the celebrated inventor of wireless telegraphy (1895). Shortly after the appearance of Popov's invention twenty-seven fishermen, carried out into the Baltic Sea on an ice floe, were saved by radiogram. However, Popov's wireless telegraph found no application in Russia, and the world credits this invention to Marconi who never mentioned a word of his Russian predecessor. When Popov applied to the government in 1895 for a grant of 1,000 rubles to set up an experimental radiotelegraph the Minister of War replied: "I do not permit funds to be granted for such a chimera."

Russia's technico-economic and cultural backwardness was the cause of many scientific discoveries and inventions by outstanding Russian scientists failing to find application in their native country.

Historical science made considerable progress in the 'eighties and 'nineties. The lectures of one of the most outstanding bourgeois historians of Russia, V. O. Klyuchevsky, to cite only one instance, enjoyed great popularity.

**The Struggle for a Marxist Science in Russia.** The development of the working class rapidly advanced in Russia the Marxist theory of society. Marxism was first propagandized in Russia in the 'eighties, with the appearance of Plekhanov's works against the Narodniks. Plekhanov's Marxist works, *Our Differences* and *Socialism and the Political Struggle*, cleared the ground for the spread of Marxism in Russia. *Essays on the History of Materialism*, *On the Development of the Monistic View of History*, *The Question of the Role of the Individual in History*, and other theoretical works written by him, were, in the words of Lenin, "the finest of all the international literature of Marxism." \* But even the best works of Plekhanov were not free from idealistic errors.

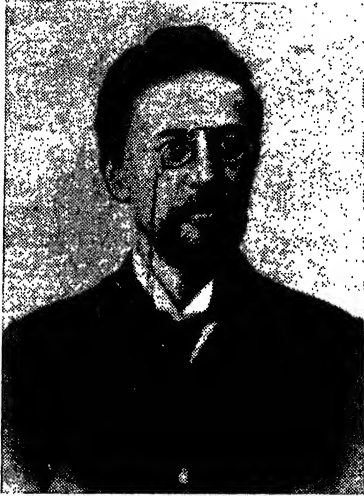
The theories of Marx and Engels were elaborated and raised to a still higher plane by the great leader of the world proletariat, V. I. Lenin, and his faithful disciple and associate J. V. Stalin.

Lenin became the creator of Marxism in the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolutions, the founder of Leninism.

The classic works of Lenin *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats*, and *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* are masterly examples of the unity of revolutionary theory and practice. In these works Lenin laid the foundation for Leninism. His works on the history of capitalism in Russia in which he admirably applies materialistic dialectics to the phenomena of social life, are classic Marxist works in the field of history.

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\* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. XXVI, p. 135, Moscow, 1937.



A. P. Chekhov

Lenin's remarkable work *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats* was first published illegally. A section of this work has not been found while the first and third parts were found only in 1923. Lenin's first work *About the So-called Question of Markets* (1893) was regarded as lost for ever and was found only after the lapse of forty-four years. It was published in 1937.

**Russian Literature.** One of the most outstanding Russian writers of the 'eighties and 'nineties was Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (1860-1904). His satirical works unmasked the representatives of the intelligentsia of the 'eighties, the impotent whimperers, futile people, wall-

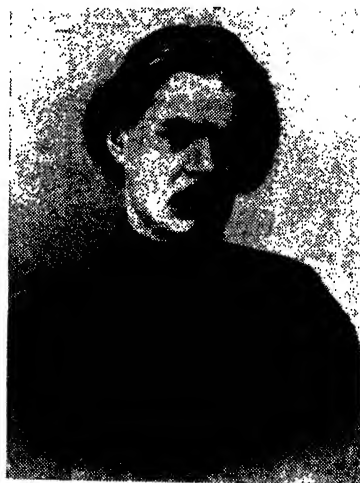
owing in the trivialities of life. Chekhov branded this intelligentsia, calling it "hypocritical, false, hysterical, ill-bred, lazy."

Chekhov bore a passionate hatred for the bourgeois liberals and ridiculed them bitterly. The Russian philistine found Chekhov an enemy who knew no mercy. Chekhov also exposed the tsarist regime. He portrayed tsarist Russia under the guise of a mental hospital (*Ward No. 6*). Emphasizing the fact that Chekhov was the "accuser of vulgarity," A. M. Gorky wrote of him: "Vulgarity was his enemy. All his life he fought it, ridiculed it and portrayed it. . . ." Chekhov died at the age of forty-four from tuberculosis, at the height of his creative powers.

One of the greatest writer-democrats was V. G. Korolenko (1853-1921). In the 'seventies he became a Narodnik and constant inmate of prisons and places of exile. Korolenko won fame by *Makar's Dream*, a story illustrating the ruthless exploitation of the defenceless Yakuts by the Russian merchants and the tsarist administrators. The works of Korolenko (*The Blind Musician*, *Without a Tongue*, and many others) are filled with a passionate love for his people. His *A History of My Contemporary* is one of the finest examples of memoir literature. In his works Korolenko, as he himself has said, aimed "to defend the rights and dignity of man wherever it was possible to do so by pen."

The young working class of the 'nineties produced its literary genius in the person of the great Russian writer, A. M. Gorky (1868-1936).

Alexei Maximovich Peshkov, who wrote under the pen-name of Maxim Gorky, was born on March 16, 1868 in Nizhni Novgorod (now the city of Gorky). He began to work at the age of ten, leading a life full of hardships in a variety of callings, from cook's help on a ship to stevedore, etc. Gorky was so poor, he could not even complete his elementary education. The hard and joyless childhood and youth of the great writer are described in his books *Childhood*, and *Into the World*. The life of Gorky was portrayed in Soviet films of the same name, adapted from these books. In his book *My Universities*, the chief part of his trilogy, the great writer deals with one of the most important phases



A. M. Gorky

of his life—the period when he became a man, a writer and a revolutionary. As a youth Gorky roamed throughout the country, earning his bread at casual jobs. His first story was *Makar Chudra*, which appeared in 1892.

In 1901 his famous *The Song of the Stormy Petrel* sounded like a tocsin. It was a passionate call for revolution. "Let the fury of the storm break higher," wrote the poet, who has been named the "Stormy Petrel of the Revolution."

In 1902 Gorky had already won universal recognition as a writer. The Academy of Sciences elected him an honorary member, but aroused by this "insolence" Nicholas II ordered the name of Gorky to be deleted from the list of academicians. Tsarist reprisals against the revolutionary writer evoked a protest from Chekhov and Korolenko both of whom resigned their membership on the academy.

Gorky's plays *Philistines* and *The Lower Depths*, performed by the Moscow Art Theatre, achieved tremendous success. His works sounded as a call to the struggle against tsarism and capitalism. Gorky became the favourite writer of the proletariat not only in Russia but in Western Europe and America as well. Gorky was imprisoned in tsarist Russia more than once and was exiled for active participation in the revolutionary movement.

**The Literature of the Peoples of Tsarist Russia.** Ivan Franko (1856-1916), the son of a Galician blacksmith, was a great Ukrainian writer of this time. Like the Russian Narodniks of the 'eighties Franko

gave first place to the task of peaceful activities in industry and education. "The plough—there lies our power; education—there lies our future," said Franko. The works of Franko played a very important part in fostering Ukrainian literature. His realistic stories, giving a vivid and faithful description of the life of the workers and peasants of Western Ukraine, brought him the fame he merited. Franko translated the works of dozens of authors into Ukrainian, including several works by Marx.

The 'eighties saw the beginning of the literary career of the Armenian writer Shirvanzade (the pen-name used by A. Movsesyan). In his works he was a follower of Balzac and exposed, using the history of the Armenian bourgeoisie as his material, the vices of bourgeois society. Subsequently Shirvanzade enthusiastically hailed the establishment of the Soviet government in Armenia. Shirvanzade has been awarded the title of People's Writer of Armenia and Merited Writer of Azerbaijan.

Kosta Levanovich Khetagurov (1859-1906), the great Ossetian poet, revolutionary-democrat, creator of the Ossetian literary language and the founder of Ossetian literature, began his literary career in the 'eighties. Poet, artist, playwright, critic and publicist, Kosta Khetagurov's works reflected the cherished hopes of his people and the best traditions of the culture of the Russian people, linked with the names of Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov. Tsarism dealt cruelly with the poet and repeatedly banished him from his native land.

**Russian Art.** The artist V. I. Surikov (1848-1916) was the founder and the greatest representative of Russian historical painting. His famous pictures *Morning of the "Streltsi" Execution*, *Boyarynya Morozova*, *Subjugation of Siberia*, *Menshikov in Beryozovo*, *Suvorov Crossing the Alps*, faithfully recreate the past. Surikov portrayed the movement of the masses, arousing a profound sense of sympathy for them among the spectators. The people in Surikov's pictures are not a passive mass, but a real force, rising up against social injustice.

V. A. Serov (1865-1911) was a first-class master of portrait painting. His portraits as well as his historical pictures of the epoch of Peter I and Catherine II are distinguished for their great artistic power of characterization.

The landscapes of I. I. Levitan (1861-1900), a close friend of Chekhov, are remarkable interpretations of the nature of Central Russia. *Vladimirka*, showing Vladimir Chaussée, the road along which revolutionaries were driven to Siberia, is particularly realistic.

A vital part in the development of Russian theatrical art was played by the Moscow Art Theatre (now named after M. Gorky) found-

ed by K. S. Stanislavsky and V. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko in 1898. This theatre of profound artistic realism staged the best plays of Chekhov, Gorky, Ibsen and other progressive writers. By staging the plays of M. Gorky the theatre raised its voice in protest against the persecution by tsarism of the great proletarian writer and won the love and gratitude of the Russian people.

Fyotr Ilyich Chaikovsky (1840-1893)—one of the greatest composers of the world, reached the height of his power in the 'eighties and the beginning of the 'nineties. His magnificent operas (*Eugene Onegin*, *The Queen of Spades*) and ballets (*Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Casse-noisette*) are part of the permanent repertoire of Soviet theatres. *Eugene Onegin* is the most popular opera in the U.S.S.R. Chaikovsky is equally great as a master of symphonic music. His symphonies and symphonic poems (among the latter *Romeo and Juliet* and *Francesca da Rimini*) are favourites with the public and are included in the repertoire of Soviet symphony concerts. The songs and romances of Chaikovsky are characteristically lyrical and sincere. In one of his letters Chaikovsky wrote about himself: "It seems to me that I am really gifted with the quality of being able to express truthfully, sincerely and simply the thoughts, feelings and images inspired by the text. In this sense I am a realist and a true Russian."

The Ukrainian composer, N. V. Lysenko (1842-1912), began to compose in the 'nineties. His great merit lies in the publication of a number of collections of Ukrainian folk songs. Lysenko made use of Ukrainian songs on which he based his operas *A Night in May*, *Christmas Eve* and *Taras Bulba*. The latter was first performed only under the Soviet government. Lysenko wrote a number of symphonic works based on popular Ukrainian songs. He has composed music to a number of works by T. G. Shevchenko.

The rise of an admirable Ukrainian theatre, founded by M. L. Kropovynitsky, dates to the 'eighties. A number of celebrated actors, headed by the great Ukrainian actress, M. K. Zankovetskaya, were members of this group.

In 1917 the great proletarian writer, A. M. Gorky, summed up the grandiose creative achievements in the field of Russian art in the 19th century as follows: "The Russian people revealed a wonderful force, creating under the most terrible conditions a splendid literature, amazing paintings and an original music which excites the admiration of the world."

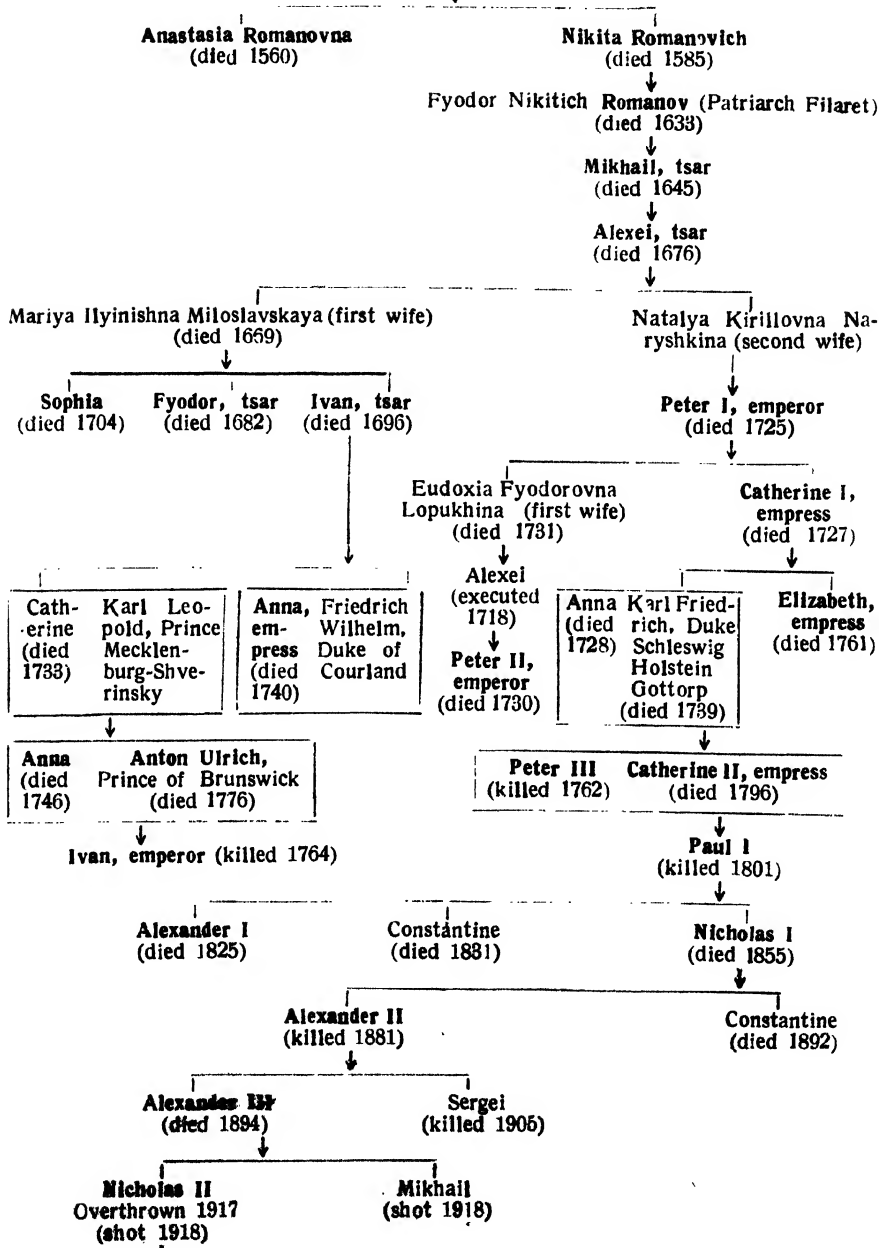
"The colossus Pushkin," wrote Gorky, "is our greatest pride and the fullest expression of the spiritual forces of Russia and, side by side with him are the magic-working Glinka and noble Bryullov, Gogol, knowing no pity for himself or for others, the melancholy Lermontov and the sad Turgenev, the wrathful Nekrasov, the great rebel Tolstoy, and our sick conscience Dostoyevsky; Kramskoy, Repin,



the inimitable Musorgsky, and Leskov who spent all his life and energy creating a positive type of a Russian; and finally, the great lyric Chaikovsky and the verbal magician Ostrovsky, as unlike each other as only men in Russia can be where one and the same generation contains people, as it were, from different ages, so different are they psychologically, so unfusible. All this greatness has been created by Russia in less than a hundred years. It is with a keen joy and overwhelming sense of pride that one views not only the abundance of talents born in Russia in the 19th century but also the startling differences among them, differences to which the historians of our art do not pay sufficient attention."

# GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE ROMANOV DYNASTY

Roman Yurievich Zakharyin-Yuriev  
(died 1543)





# **IMPORTANT DATES** **IN THE HISTORY OF THE U.S.S.R.** **IN THE 18TH AND 19TH CENTURIES**

1682-1725	Reign of Peter I
1682	Uprising of the Streltsi in Moscow
1700-1721	Russia's War with Sweden
1700	Introduction of New Calendar
1705	Uprising in Astrakhan
1707-1708	Uprising on the Don under Leadership of Kondrati Bulavin
1708	Introduction of New Russian Secular Type
1709, June 27	Victory over the Swedish Army at Poltava
1711-1765	Lomonosov, Mikhail Vasilyevich
1714	Victory over the Swedish Fleet at Hangö udde
1725	Founding of the First Academy of Sciences
1728-1730	First Bering Expedition
1730	Attempt of the "Councillors" to Limit the Autocracy
1731	Oath of Citizenship Taken by the Kazakhs of the Small Horde to Russia
1739	Uprising of Karasakal in Bashkiria
1740	Conquest of Central Asia by Nadir, Shah of Persia
1741-1761	Reign of Elizabeth Petrovna
1755	Founding of the Moscow University
1759	Victory of the Russian Army over Friedrich II at Kunersdorf
1762-1796	Reign of Catherine II
1768-1774	First War with Turkey under Catherine II
1768	Uprising Against Poland in the Ukraine (Koliivshchina)
1773	First Partition of Poland
1773-1775	Peasant War under Leadership of Emelyan Pugachev
1775	Gubernia Reform
1783	Annexation of the Crimea
1785	New Municipal System
1787-1791	Second Turkish War
1793	Second Partition of Poland
1794	Polish Uprising under Leadership of Kosciuszko
1795	Third Partition of Poland
1796-1801	Reign of Paul I
1797	Ukase on Three Days' Corvée
1799	Suvorov's Italian Campaign
1799-1837	A. S. Pushkin
1801-1825	Reign of Alexander I
1801	Incorporation of Georgia into Russia
1803	Ukase on Free Peasants
1805-1807	War Against Napoleon in Alliance with Austria, England and Prussia

1806-1812 . . . . .	War with Turkey
1806-1813 . . . . .	War with Persia
1807 . . . . .	Tilsit Treaties with France
1808-1809 . . . . .	War with Sweden
1812 . . . . .	Peace Treaty with Turkey in Bucharest
1812 . . . . .	National War with Napoleon
1812, August 26 . . . . .	Battle of Borodino
1813-1814 . . . . .	War Against Napoleon in Alliance with Austria, England and Prussia
1825, December 14 . . . . .	Uprising of the Decembrists
1825-1855 . . . . .	Reign of Nicholas I
1830-1831 . . . . .	Uprising in Poland
1837 . . . . .	First Railway in Russia
1853-1856 . . . . .	Crimean War
1855-1881 . . . . .	Reign of Alexander II
1856 . . . . .	Paris Peace
1859 . . . . .	Defeat of Shamyl
1861, February 19 . . . . .	Abolition of Serfdom
1863 . . . . .	Polish Uprising
1864 . . . . .	Zemstvo Reforms
1864 . . . . .	Judicial Reforms
1870, April 10(22) . . . . .	Birth of V. I. Lenin
1870 . . . . .	Municipal Reforms
1874 . . . . .	Introduction of Compulsory Military Service
1874, Spring . . . . .	"Going to the People"
1875 . . . . .	"The South Russian Labour Union"
1877-1878 . . . . .	Russo-Turkish War
1878 . . . . .	Berlin Congress
1879, December 9 (21) . . . . .	Birth of J. V. Stalin
1878-1880 . . . . .	"The Northern Union of Russian Workers"
1881, March 1 . . . . .	Assassination of Alexander II
1881-1894 . . . . .	Reign of Alexander III
1881 . . . . .	Law Strengthening the Police Force
1883 . . . . .	Organization of the "Emancipation of Labour" Group
1885 . . . . .	Morozov Strike
1886 . . . . .	Law on Employment of Workers in Factories and Mills
1889 . . . . .	Law on Zemstvo Chiefs
1890 . . . . .	New Law on Zemstvo Institutions
1891-1893 . . . . .	Conclusion of Franco-Russian Alliance
1894-1917 . . . . .	Reign of Nicholas II
1895 . . . . .	Organization by V. I. Lenin of the Petersburg "League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class"
1897-1900 . . . . .	V. I. Lenin in Exile
1898 . . . . .	First Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. in Minsk



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